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GOVERNMENT OF NORTHERN IRELAND
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

MONTHLY REPORT

NOVEMBER, 1939.

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GOVERNMENT OF NORTHERN IRELAND
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

MONTHLY REPORT

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CONTENTS

PAGE

AGRICULTURAL CONDITIONS:—

CONDITIONS AT 1st NOVEMBER ... 388
THE CROPS ... 389
FRUIT ... 391
LIVE STOCK ... 392
DAIRY PRODUCE ... 393

ARTICLES:—

Christmas Poultry Trade Prospects ... 394
Feeding Stuffs in War Time ... 396
Seed Supplies ... 399
The Fertiliser Position ... 402
The Ploughing-up Campaign ... 403

MARKETING SCHEMES AND ENACTMENTS:—

Pigs (Provisional Prices) (Northern Ireland) Order, 1939:—

FIXED PRICES ... 408

Agricultural Marketing (Pig Industry) Act (N.I.), 1934:—

GRADING STATISTICS ... 409
COST OF STANDARD PIG RATION ... 410

Prices of Fat Stock in Great Britain ... 410

Butter: Wholesale and Retail Prices ... 410

Marketing of Eggs Acts (N.I.), 1924-1937:—

NORTHERN IRELAND EGG PRICES ... 411

Eggs: Wholesale and Retail Prices ... 411

Potatoes: Supplies of Ware and Seed ... 412

CONTENTS (*continued*)

PAGE

Wheat Acts, 1932 and 1939:—

MINISTRY OF FOOD ANNOUNCEMENT OF WHEAT PRICES 412
NOTE ON THE ABOVE PRICES OF HOME-GROWN WHEAT 413
HIGHER STANDARD PRICES FOR WHEAT AND OATS 414
ADVANCE DEFICIENCY PAYMENTS FOR 1939/40 415

Flax Control 415

Wool Control 416

Milk and Milk Products Acts (N.I.), 1934 and 1936 417

AGRICULTURAL NOTES:—

SEASONAL FARM NOTES 418
SEASONAL LIVESTOCK NOTES 422
SEASONAL GARDEN AND ORCHARD NOTES 423
THE UTILISATION OF GLASSHOUSES IN WAR TIME 424
SEASONAL POULTRY-KEEPING NOTES 426

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REMINDERS:—

GENERAL 430
EIGHTEENTH EGG LAYING TEST AT STORMONT 431

AGRICULTURAL INDEX NUMBERS:—

MONTHLY INDEX NUMBERS OF PRICES 434
PRICES USED IN CALCULATING INDICES 436
MINISTRY OF LABOUR RETAIL PRICES AND INDICES 437

AGRICULTURAL PRICES:—

TRADE AND PRICES OF LIVESTOCK AT BELFAST AUCTION MARTS ... 438
TRADE AND PRICES OF LIVESTOCK AT FAIRS 441

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

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NOVEMBER, 1939.

With weather conditions continuing favourable, farmers have been able to maintain good progress with seasonal work, and such operations as the lifting and storing of potatoes, and the ploughing of stubble land and old lea have been well advanced on many farms. Incidentally, the progress made in the ploughing-up campaign is indicated in an article on page 403, where the latest figures are given of the number of applications received and the acreage of the old pasture land to be ploughed up for the grant of £2 per acre. This article also covers the latest arrangements made for supplies of tractors and other implements, as well as dealing with several pertinent points arising out of the scheme of ploughing grants and the Compulsory Tillage Order.

An article dealing with the Christmas poultry trade appears on page 394. As will be gathered, the position this year is, on the whole, very satisfactory in regard to supplies of Northern Ireland birds and, from information received from cross-Channel sources, it would appear that the festive board will be adequately catered for this season, despite the difficulties arising out of the present conflict.

The attention of readers is also directed to the special articles giving the latest information regarding supplies of fertilisers, feeding stuffs, and farm seeds.

20th November, 1939.

AGRICULTURAL CONDITIONS.

AGRICULTURAL CONDITIONS AT 1st NOVEMBER, 1939.

The weather during the greater part of October was fine and favourable for outdoor work. Although conditions at times were often stormy and cold, especially towards the end of the month, there were only a few short spells of heavy rain and comparatively little frost.

Farmers took advantage of favourable conditions to complete the gathering in of the grain crops, and to make good progress with the raising of the main crop potatoes, with the general result that by the end of the month the lifting of the tubers had been practically completed, and the bulk of the crop pitted or stored.

The comparatively dry state of the ground enabled farmers to make considerable progress with tillage work, and in most areas a good deal of old lea and also of stubble land was ploughed up during last month. There was, however, little rotational grassland turned over, as farmers are generally desirous of utilising their pasture land to the maximum extent during this favourable season on account of the need to reduce the amount of imported feeding stuffs required to the minimum.

The weather and soil conditions were also suitable for the sowing of winter wheat, and it is gratifying to note that many farmers took advantage of this, and in some districts the acreage sown under wheat is more than treble that at the corresponding date last year.

Generally speaking, there were sufficient crops of good quality this season to provide seed for the increased crop acreage of next year, but reasonable care is necessary. Farmers are especially advised to read the article on Seed Supplies appearing on page 399 in this issue.

Despite occasional night frosts, the pastures remained in good condition during last month, and in most fields the "keep" is exceptionally good for the time of year; there was, however, a seasonal deterioration in grassland towards the end of the month. As a rule home-grown fodder is fairly plentiful but, as already mentioned, farmers are wisely conserving their stocks as much as possible, and taking full advantage of the satisfactory state of the pastures. The position with regard to purchased feeding stuffs varied considerably throughout the country, and in some localities fairly adequate supplies were available at reasonable prices, while in others the position was not as satisfactory at times. Uncertainty about supplies of feeding stuffs is only to be expected during a period of transition between peace and war, and until the organisation to meet the changed conditions is completed. The Government has taken steps to ensure more regular and adequate supplies of imported feeding stuffs in the immediate future. An article dealing with the position in general appears on page 396 of this Report.

Livestock was generally maintained in good health and condition during October. On a few farms "hoose" caused a good deal of trouble among young cattle, and "red water" was also fairly prevalent in some districts, but no extensive outbreaks of disease were reported, and the general position regarding livestock is highly satisfactory. The stocks of breeding animals are usually being fully maintained, and with the feeding stuffs position likely to improve in the near future, there should be no falling off in the production of livestock in Northern Ireland.

The livestock trade last month was generally slacker, and prices for store and fat cattle and all classes of sheep showed a weaker tendency. The chief exception to this trend was dairy cattle, which remained in brisk request at prices which continued to move appreciably in seller's favour. Sucker pigs and brood sows were usually in good request at previous quotations.

THE CROPS.

WHEAT.—The wheat crop was generally very satisfactorily harvested, and it is keeping well in the stacks and sheds. In most districts threshing is now in progress, and in some localities it is nearing completion. Good yields of high quality grain have been obtained and, with seed wheat much in demand, as a result of the efforts now being made to increase our supplies of home-produced food, a fair proportion of the grain has already been sold to farmers and merchants at prices ranging from 8/- to 16/- per cwt. Wheat growers should read the announcements made in regard to the prices of this crop on page 412.

OATS.—The position of oats in stack is generally satisfactory, but in some cases heating took place as a result of too hurried gathering in, and the absence of drying winds at the time of stacking. Threshing is being pushed forward. In most districts, however, the bulk of the crop has still to be threshed, and much of the better quality oats will be kept for seed and not threshed until the spring. The quality of the bulk of this grain is expected to be good.

Supplies of last year's oats practically disappeared from the markets last month, and the new season's crop formed the bulk of the offerings. Prices during the month had a steady upward trend, and the average for the month was 1/8½d. higher than the September figure at 8/1½d. per cwt. Oat straw was also firmer in price at an average of 52/3d. per ton.

An announcement regarding a higher standard price for oats appears on page 414.

BARLEY.—This crop was well harvested, and threshing is now proceeding with generally satisfactory results. No reports of sales of barley are to hand as most of the grain is being kept for feeding or for use as seed.

FLAX.—Scutching operations are in progress, but little has yet been done, and in some areas the work is proceeding less rapidly than usual. The yields and quality of the fibre have generally been somewhat better than usual, although a few crops gave disappointing results. Very little fibre has yet been marketed. The Control prices fixed for this crop appear on page 415.

HAY.—The threshing of seed hay proceeded steadily during the month and most of it has now been done. The quality of most of the seed is good.

Grass seed sold at dearer rates during last month. Prices were generally from 2/- to 10/- above those ruling in September. The following were the average prices per cwt. for October: Italian, 28/0½d.; Perennial, 17/1½d.; Mixed Seed, 20/3¼d. and Crested Dogstail 46/4¾d.

The quality of the hay marketed during October was fair to good, and prices during the month continued their upward trend, although recently an easier tendency has been noticeable.

The average price for all classes of upland hay recorded a further advance of 16/6d. on the month to 97/10d. per ton, whilst meadow hay was dearer by 11/7d. per ton at 76/6d.

MANGELS.—The lifting of this crop is now well under way in many districts, and in some cases the roots have all been stored. The general condition of the roots is very good, and frost has caused little damage.

TURNIPS.—The weather during October was favourable for the continued growth of the turnip crop and its general condition is now much better than could have been expected earlier in the season. The quality of the crop is usually satisfactory, although some early sown fields have suffered from attacks of mildew, and there have also been some complaints regarding "raan" disease.

POTATOES.—The lifting of the potato crop was practically completed during October, and most of it is now pitted or stored. The quality of the tubers is as a rule good, and the proportion of sound ware potatoes is well above normal. In most crops the tubers are sound and free from blemish, but in some cases late attacks of blight caused damage to varieties such as Up-to-Date. On the whole, however, blight has been less severe than usual, and the general position of this year's potato crop is satisfactory.

Potato prices remained fairly steady for the first three weeks of the month, but became easier towards the close. Quotations were usually a shade lower on the month, and the average for all classes of the main crop cheapened by 1d. to 3/5¼d. per cwt. The average prices for the principal varieties were: British Queen, 3/7¾d.; Arran Victory, 3/6¼d.; and Kerr's Pink, 3/4¾d.

The prices per ton paid to growers by shipping merchants for the week ended 4th November, 1939, eased slightly on the week and ranged as follows:—

	Variety	*Bagged*
WARE	Arran Victory ...	£2 0 0 to £2 15 0
	Arran Banner ...	£2 0 0 to £2 5 0
	Arran Consul ...	£2 10 0 to £2 15 0
	Kerr's Pink ...	£2 10 0 to £2 15 0
	Gladstone ...	£3 0 0
	Majestic ...	£2 5 0 to £3 0 0
	Up-to-Date ...	£2 10 0 to £2 15 0
SEED	Arran Banner ...	£3 0 0 to £4 0 0
	Majestic ...	£3 10 0
	Up-to-Date ...	£4 0 0 to £4 2 6

An announcement made by the Ministry of Food, in regard to potato control, dated 27th October, is printed on page 412.

Other Vegetables.—Over the month of October home-grown produce marketed for local consumption generally firmed in price. Supplies of savoys marketed in Belfast and Portadown during the month fetched from 1/- to 2/- per dozen, and the average monthly price declined by 2¼d. to 1/6d. per dozen. Cabbage prices ranged from 9d. to 1/9d. per dozen, averaging 1/3½d. which represents an increase of ¼d. over the month. Cauliflowers were 2¾d. dearer during the month at an average price of 1/9¾d. per dozen. The price of leeks ranged from 3d. to 1/2d. per bunch, the average price being 4½d., or ¼d. below the September price. Parsley prices ranged from 3d. to 6d. and averaged 4½d. per bunch, a decline of ½d. on the month. Carrots sold at 7d. per bunch, indicating a rise of ¼d. on the month, while parsnips and garden turnips fetched from 3d. to 6d. and from 3d. to 8d. per bunch respectively.

FRUIT.

Apples.—Supplies of home-grown apples at Belfast market were plentiful at firm prices during October, and the principal variety, Bramley's seedling, fetched from 5/6d. to 8/- per 10 stone barrel, and Grenadiers from 3/- to 5/- per 10 stone barrel. Quotations for dessert varieties such as Kemps and Worcester Pearmain ranged in price from 4/- to 12/- per 10 stone barrel, according to quality. Other varieties and lower grade produce sold at from 3/- upwards.

Tomatoes.—Home-grown tomatoes were firm in price on the month at from 8/- to 9/- per 12 lb. for top quality, with lower grade produce selling at from 5/6d. to 7/-. Green tomatoes were available at from 5/- per 12 lb.

LIVE STOCK.

CATTLE.—The health of store cattle remained satisfactory during last month, but in some localities "hoose" was rather severe among calves, and "red water" continued fairly prevalent. The condition of the cattle was generally well maintained. On some farms where the pastures remained in an excellent state during the comparatively mild weather of October, the animals made a better thrive than is usual at this time of year.

The volume of trade in store cattle during last month was fairly large, but the demand was much slower than in September, and many of the inferior sorts failed to find buyers even at prices which were appreciably reduced on the month.

A good many of the cattle which were being fattened on grass were sold off during October, especially towards the end of the month when the pasturage began to show signs of deterioration. The number of cattle still on grass is about normal for the time of year, and their general condition is quite good. The demand for fat cattle at fairs and marts last month was duller than in the previous month, and prices fluctuated around lower levels.

Dairy cattle were in normally good health and condition at the end of last month, and calving continued normally satisfactory. The chief ailments were "felon", "red water" and "contagious catarrh", but none of the outbreaks was of serious dimensions. The milk yields showed a seasonal decline at the end of October, but in some districts they remained at a high level, due to the comparatively mild season and the good grass.

Supplies of dairy stock at Northern Ireland fairs and markets last month encountered a very brisk enquiry, and prices exhibited a steady upward trend. The position with regard to dairy cattle varies a good deal, but most dairymen intend to maintain their herds at the normal sizes. It is generally appreciated that the increase in the tillage area will not cause any serious interference with the maintenance of the size of the dairy herds, and that the increase in the supplies of home-grown foods resulting from the extra tillage will be very helpful to dairy farmers.

SHEEP.—The condition of the flocks is generally good, and as a whole the animals are exceptionally healthy. Occasional cases of "foot rot" have been reported, but "liver fluke" disease is so far mainly conspicuous by its absence. It is still rather early to say much about the fertility of the flocks this season, but the number of ewes served and returning for service appears to differ little from that of previous years. In some flocks it would appear that the service period was rather earlier than is usually the case.

Trade for fat sheep and lambs was steady for the greater part of last month and, although an easier tendency was observed towards the close, quotations throughout the month generally held to previous levels. With the

season for breeding sheep drawing to a close, rather mixed lots of breeding and store sheep encountered a dull enquiry, and prices moved in buyers' favour.

Pigs.—Sucker pigs were in firm request last month at prices similar to those ruling during September, whilst the few brood sows on offer were in moderate demand at late rates. Supplies of pork were readily bought up at current fixed prices.

Poultry.—Seasonally increased supplies of poultry were offered at markets during October, but prices generally showed little variation. For chickens the average price remained at 2/2¼d. each, the top price recorded being 3/9d. The average price of hens declined by 1¾d. to 1/6d. each, the top price being 2/7d., whilst duck prices firmed by 2¼d. to average 2/5¼d., and ranged to 3 6d. each.

Live weight prices paid by wholesalers recorded slight increases as regards chickens, but for hens and ducks were unchanged. Prices per lb. ranged as follows: Chickens, large 7d. to 8d.; medium 6½d. to 7½d.; small 6d. to 7½d.; hens, 4½d. to 5d.; ducks, 5d. to 6½d.

Horses.—The horse trade weakened somewhat during October, mainly on account of the fact that many farmers and merchants have been able to obtain sufficient rations of petrol to keep their lorries on the road, and the practice of tractor ploughing is increasing rapidly. The demand was still generally in excess of the supply, however, and good working horses continued to fetch prices ranging up to £80 per head for first class animals, and from £20 to £60 for serviceable farm horses of from four to ten years old. Horses over ten years old fetched from £10 to £40 per head according to age and type, whilst unbroken colts made from £20 to £38, and foals from £12 to £20 per head. Prices generally were little altered on the month.

DAIRY PRODUCE.

Milk.—The milk yields declined towards the end of last month, but in a few cases the supplies of milk to creameries were above the average for the time of year. The prices paid for milk delivered to the creameries during October were higher than in the previous month, and ranged from 5d. to 6d. per gallon for milk delivered, the separated milk being returned to the farmer.

As the average price paid for milk produced in Northern Ireland and delivered to creameries for manufacturing purposes for the month of September, 1939, exceeded the standard price provided for by the Milk and Milk Products Acts (Northern Ireland), 1934 to 1938, no equalisation payments will be made in respect of that month.

Farm Butter.—Supplies marketed in October sold at further increased prices. The average price for print butter hardened by ¾d. to 1/4¼d. per lb., and that for lump butter by ½d. to 1/2¾d. The general price ranges were from 1/2d. to 1/6d. per lb. for farmer's print butter, and from 9½d. to 1/4d. per lb. for lump.

Eggs.—Prices for hen and duck eggs, as fixed by the Ministry of Agriculture from week to week, advanced to higher levels during October. A table of egg prices showing the prices ruling during the five weeks ended 4th November, 1939, together with comparative figures for 1938, appears on page 411 of this Report. A record of the maximum prices fixed to date by the Ministry of Food is also included on that page.

CHRISTMAS POULTRY TRADE PROSPECTS.

With Christmas only a few weeks ahead Northern Ireland poultry-keepers and merchants will doubtless be desirous of learning something about this season's prospects. The general question of supply and price in Great Britain will remain an open one this year on account of the war, but it is hoped that the following general estimate of supplies of Northern Ireland birds will prove of interest.

The agricultural statistics for Northern Ireland, as published in the Monthly Report for August, showed that, while the total number of poultry in the country at the 1st June last, was practically the same as that at the same date in 1938, the number of turkeys had decreased to about 405,000 head, and the numbers of geese and ducks also recorded decreases. The number of ordinary poultry, however, showed an increase on the year. The decline in the number of turkeys was most marked in the case of young birds, and it seemed then that the supplies available for the Christmas trade would be smaller than in 1938.

Subsequent enquiries made at the end of October have, however, indicated that the number of turkeys being fattened for the Christmas markets is well up to normal dimensions in most districts. This change in the supply position is attributed to the lower rate of mortality, chiefly on account of favourable weather conditions. The excellent weather prevailing during the harvest months was most beneficial in that it allowed flocks of turkeys and other poultry to develop well and reduced losses to a minimum. The supplies of geese are, however, expected to be somewhat smaller than usual.

As a general rule producers have been able to obtain fairly good supplies of purchased feeding stuffs, and these, supplemented with home-produced foods, have ensured that the flocks have been fed satisfactorily. This fact, together with the favourable weather experienced since the beginning of August, has brought about the present satisfactory position, and it is, therefore, highly probable that plentiful supplies of well-finished turkeys will be available for the coming Christmas trade. It is generally estimated that about half the cock birds will be marketed at weights under 18 lb. live weight, and about the same proportion of the hens at under 10 lb. live weight. The proportion, however, varies a great deal from district to district.

In some areas a start has already been made with the marketing of the birds, and the prices paid by wholesale merchants to producers in Northern Ireland for turkeys varied from 9d. to 1/3d., whilst geese were fetching from 4d. to 5½d. per lb. live weight. The prices quoted for turkeys are higher than those ruling early in November last year, whilst those for geese are on a par with those obtaining at the same period in 1938. The great majority of the poultry are being sold by weight, as has been the general practice in recent years. It is expected that in some districts a fair proportion of the Christmas poultry will be consigned directly to cross-Channel firms, whilst in others the bulk of the birds will be bought by local wholesalers. Generally speaking, it seems highly probable that supplies of poultry in the coming season will be disposed of through much the same channels as in 1938.

Last year the principal countries which sent dead turkeys to the United Kingdom were Hungary, Argentina, Uruguay and Yugoslavia, while the main Empire sources were Eire, Canada and Australia. It is certain that the increased costs of freight and war risks insurance will prevent European and South American supplies from competing seriously with the home birds as in previous seasons, and on this account alone prices may be expected to show an increase over those obtained last Christmas. At all events it is only reasonable to expect that prices will rule above those for 1938, but it should be remembered that at present poultry prices are still at about normal levels, and there is yet no question of the trade coming under Government control. Furthermore, meat prices have shown no more than a slight seasonal increase since the outbreak of war, and any attempt on the part of producers to seek fancy prices in view of the national emergency may have the effect of driving the consumer to a more reasonably priced roast of beef for his Christmas dinner, a decision which the consumer may cheerfully accept as a war-time economy, but which may result in some disappointment to the turkey producer.

FEEDING STUFFS IN WAR TIME.

As many readers will have discovered for themselves, the outbreak of war has produced an inevitable but temporary disturbance of the normal channels of trade. This has affected all commercial activities in varying degrees, and among them the normal flow of feeding stuffs. Fortunately we are already in a position to realise that these difficulties are being overcome. The Navy holds the sea, convoys are coming forward regularly, the numerous and complicated arrangements necessary for switching over from the peace time routine of trade to a war routine, from purchase and shipping by individual firms to purchase and carriage on Government account, have been completed and are working fairly smoothly.

The immediate problem is to carry over the period of difficulty which remains before these arrangements produce their full results in a more even flow of supplies.

This period will be difficult for many farmers. It is for this reason that the Ministry has for some time past been issuing warnings by broadcast and other means, urging farmers to make the utmost use of home-grown feeding stuffs and to exercise every possible economy in the use of imported cereals.

For the same reason the Ministry has arranged that, for the time being, imported cereals shall only be sold in the form of ready mixed rations. This is the only effective way of economising their use, since by this method, for every 30 tons of maize used, 100 tons of balanced rations can be distributed. It also renders impossible the wasteful practice of feeding maize meal unsupplemented by high protein foods and other cereals.

Finally, the Ministry has advised farmers to kill pigs at the lowest bacon weights, for the next few weeks, so as to conserve supplies for sows and young pigs

All these measures are, however, temporary, and have been devised to bridge the period of difficulty.

It is of the greatest importance, both in the national interests and in those of farmers themselves, that as much livestock as possible should be carried through this period. Ulster livestock forms a very important part of the home-produced food of the United Kingdom, and the livestock industry

should, in the immediate future, be highly profitable to farmers since prices, though controlled, will be good.

While it is naturally impossible in war time to prophesy accurately and precisely when a period of difficulty will end, there is every reason to hope that the position will improve early in December.

It cannot, of course, be expected that, even when this improvement has taken place, we shall find ourselves back in the enjoyment of full peace-time supplies. War creates new demands, which do not exist in peace time, on shipping, finance and commercial facilities generally; and the trade in imported feeding stuffs, like all others, must suffer reduction in consequence.

Considerations such as these serve to emphasise the paramount importance of growing as much food as possible for our animals. Not only should the area under cereal and root crops be increased, but every effort must be made to improve the stock-carrying capacity of pastures.

If farmers practise real economy in purchasing feeding stuffs and make the utmost use of home-grown supplies, their efforts will go a long way toward maintaining the normal number of livestock in the Province.

Farmers will, naturally, be interested to know how supplies of Feeding Stuffs will be procured and distributed during the War.

In the first place, all imported feeding stuffs since the outbreak of war, have been, and will continue to be bought and shipped on Imperial Government Account.

The supplies thus obtained will form, as it were, a pool for the whole United Kingdom. From this pool the Imperial Authorities, on the advice of the Ministry, will allocate an equitable portion to Northern Ireland.

The task of the Ministry will then be to supervise the distribution of the Northern Ireland share to farmers through the normal trade channels.

For these purposes the Ministry has been given certain powers of licensing and general control under the Feeding Stuffs (Control) (Northern Ireland) Order, 1939.

The prices of Feeding Stuffs are now controlled by the Imperial Government which is, of course, paying for these feeding stuffs and shipping them. At the moment prices are governed by the Feeding Stuffs (Maximum Prices) Order, 1939. This Order lays down maximum ex mill prices for

practically all "straight" feeding stuffs. As regards compound meals the price, under the Order, depends upon the cost of ingredients, cost of manufacture, cost of containers, cost of carriage, and various additional factors such as cost of War Risk Insurance, plus an additional 25/- per ton to the manufacturer, out of which however, varying rebates have to be paid to the wholesale dealer and retailer.

To sum up, there is at the moment a temporary period of difficulty, due mainly to the change over from peace to war trading practice, but it is hoped that this period will be short, and that improved supplies will soon be to hand.

For the present farmers are advised to make the most efficient use they can of supplies of home-produced foods, such as oats, surplus stocks of potatoes and separated milk. Both national and personal interests demand that farmers carry the maximum number of livestock through this time of shortage.

Farmers requiring further information about feeding stuffs should write to :—

The Secretary,

Ministry of Agriculture,

(Fertilisers and Feeding Stuffs Division),

Elmwood Avenue, Belfast.

SEED SUPPLIES.

The position in regard to supplies of seed for autumn and spring sowing is, on the whole, satisfactory. There is reason to think that the amounts required in the United Kingdom of the principal farm and garden species will be forthcoming, but in a few cases (some of them important) precaution is desirable. The position is complicated by the necessity to conserve supplies of feeding stuffs, and for that purpose to make use of some of the home-grown cereals. Furthermore, when considering what proportion of the 1939 cereal crops should be reserved for seed, it is essential to remember that very largely increased areas of the principal crops must be sown in 1940 to comply with the Tillage Order, and therefore very much larger supplies of seed than normal will be required.

It is also necessary to remember that other parts of the United Kingdom and of the Empire are for certain species almost entirely dependent upon Northern Ireland for seed, while in turn we rely for other species largely, and sometimes wholly, upon imported supplies.

Cereals.—Almost all the wheat grown in Northern Ireland is of autumn-sown varieties. A considerable area is already sown, and there is a sufficient supply of suitable kinds in the hands of merchants for what remains to be sown. Barley may present more difficulty than other cereals. The 1939 crop of barley in Northern Ireland amounted to about 3,500 acres, which may be expected to yield some three thousand tons of grain. It is planned to have at least 50,000 acres of barley in 1940. This area will require five thousand tons of seed, so that every care should be taken not to use for feeding-stuffs any barley which is suitable for seed. In principle, the same holds good for oats, although the oat supply is very plentiful as compared with barley. The 1939 crop is expected to yield about 250,000 tons of a generally good quality, and as a large proportion of the land newly ploughed under the Tillage Order will likely be sown with oats, it is estimated that some 40,000 tons of oats will be required for seed. There is, therefore, a large margin to spare in this case, but that should not lead any single farmer to trust to others to retain sufficient supplies for sowing. Every man should make certain himself of retaining a supply. The best way to store barley and oats intended for seed is in the sheaf, and the threshing of such should be postponed until later.

In connection with cereal seeds in general the importance of sowing only good, well-cleaned samples is emphasised. Where, therefore, home-saved seed, or seed purchased directly from another farmer is to be sown, it is essential that it be thoroughly cleaned and freed of weed seeds. If this is not possible, or if the sample is obviously unsuitable for seed, the farmer would be well advised to sell or feed his produce and purchase fresh seed. Change of seed, in the case of oats is generally desirable. It is not so essential in barley but, if the greatly increased area under barley, which is urgently required, is grown in 1940, it is obvious that many farmers will be obliged to purchase supplies of seed barley.

In order to make certain that any sample of grain is suitable for seed, farmers should submit the sample to the Ministry's Seed-Testing Station, Elmwood Avenue, Belfast, for test and report.

Ryegrass.—There is an abundant crop of perennial ryegrass of first-class quality, and no difficulty whatever is expected with supplies of seed of this species. Of good quality Italian, usually only about two-thirds of the amount the United Kingdom requires is produced in Northern Ireland, and it is, therefore, urged that in 1940 as much pure Italian as possible should be harvested by every grower, and that a greater acreage should be sown so as to increase as largely as possible the crop to be harvested in 1941. Meantime, uncleaned Italian should not be sold outside the United Kingdom, and present prices make it a profitable crop to sell at home. The result of the present high price paid by cleaners for Italian will naturally be a high retail price to purchasers of the cleaned seed. In view of this, and of the desirability to conserve supplies of Italian, and of the request made above for an increased sowing in 1940 by Italian seed producers, farmers who do not save seed should be sparing in their demand for Italian, bearing in mind that in a considerable degree its place can be taken by mixture or, at need, even by perennial.

Other Farm Seeds—Adequate supplies of most kinds of grasses, clovers and root crop seeds will be available. There may be a little shortage in English-grown red clover and rape. Farmers requiring rape seed for summer sowing as a catch crop are recommended to make sure they obtain dwarf rape, not the giant type.

Garden Seeds.—Difficulty is not anticipated with the majority of ordinary kinds of garden seeds, but it is possible that a sparing distribution will have to be exercised in one or two instances such as carrot and onion, for which there is likely to be a materially increased demand, and which do not store over-year satisfactorily. Those who have stocks of over-yeared seed are strongly recommended to send samples to the Seed Testing Station before either selling or sowing them.

Ordering.—Farmers, gardeners and allotment holders are strongly urged to plan their cropping for 1940 immediately and send in to their seedsman the orders for seed without the loss of a day that can be avoided. This is not because shortage is anticipated, but because time is necessary to make adequate arrangements for fair distribution and for the importation of such quantities as will be required of those seeds which have to be obtained abroad. Under present circumstances these arrangements cannot be made on any speculative basis, and only known requirements can be catered for. Early ordering will, therefore, be to the advantage of the grower, to the Ministry which has to organise supplies, and to the nation which needs the crops.

THE FERTILISER POSITION.

Apart from phosphatic manures for use on grassland there is normally very little demand for fertilisers at this time of year. A number of enquiries for fertilisers have already been made this year which is no doubt a reflection of the energy with which the tillage campaign is being prosecuted by farmers in Northern Ireland.

Large quantities of superphosphate and compound manures are manufactured in Northern Ireland, and ample supplies for current needs have already been prepared. Stocks at present available include superphosphate, potassic superphosphate, semsol, special potato manure, root manure and oats and barley manure (the last four mixtures are prepared according to the formulae of the Ministry of Agriculture). These stocks occupy considerable space in the premises of the manufacturers and merchants, and farmers who can do so would be well advised to order some of their requirements. This will enable normal production to proceed.

Arrangements have been made for Northern Ireland to receive adequate supplies of sulphate of ammonia, nitro chalk and concentrated fertilisers. Sulphate of ammonia is already in store. If kept in a dry, airy shed, sulphate of ammonia, as now manufactured, can be stored indefinitely. Thus farmers can purchase their supplies now through their usual suppliers with the knowledge that the material will keep in a satisfactory condition, provided that the bags are set on rough wooden planks, so placed that the air can circulate freely around them.

Potash fertilisers are available in the form of compound manures, and special arrangements have been made so that farmers will be able to get supplies of muriate of potash for the flax crop.

Ground North African phosphate is available at present in limited quantity, but owing to the heavy demand supplies of basic slag are short at the moment. It is hoped that the position will be improved shortly.

Farmers are reminded that advice on manuring problems can be had from the Agricultural Officers in their counties.

THE PLOUGHING-UP CAMPAIGN.

In last month's issue was included a general summary of the work being done to increase food production in Northern Ireland to meet the war emergency, and it is intended to report further progress from month to month in these pages. At the outset it may be stated that the response continues to be most satisfactory and to date some 13,000 applications have been received for the grants of £2 per acre for the ploughing-up of permanent grassland under the terms laid down in the Agricultural Development Act, 1939. The progress indicated by these figures is indeed most gratifying, and already there is every prospect that the farmers of Northern Ireland will not fail in their effort to have an increased area of tilled land of a quarter of a million acres in 1940.

The ploughing-up campaign is indeed being prosecuted with increasing vigour, and everything is moving forward steadily and smoothly. With winter approaching rapidly, it is only to be expected that the rate of progress will be slowed down by shorter hours of day-light and rougher weather conditions, and it will be all the more necessary for farmers to take full advantage of what opportunities for outdoor work present themselves. Furthermore farmers are strongly urged to plough as much as possible now, as the general postponement of the additional work necessary till the spring would, together with the normal spring work, tend to produce a very difficult problem, especially if weather conditions prove adverse.

Further important information regarding the various sides of the campaign now in full swing is given under the appropriate heading in each case in order to make it more readily understood.

SCHEME OF GRANTS FOR PLOUGHING-UP GRASSLAND.

As is evident from the figures quoted above, this scheme continues to be taken advantage of to an increasing degree. To illustrate further how the scheme is being availed of throughout the country the position to date in regard to the number of applications received and the acreage involved is tabulated below by counties.

	No. of applications	Total area involved
Antrim	1,956	13,946 acres
Armagh	1,042	6,145 ,,
Down	2,320	17,160 ,,
Fermanagh	895	4,708 ,,
Londonderry	1,995	13,706 ,,
Tyrone	4,978	27,770 ,,
Totals	13,186	83,435 ,,

The Ministry has made a start with the payments of grants for land ploughed-up and re-seeded and already some claims have been paid involving a sum of £650. The Ministry hopes to be in a position to dispose of more claims in this manner in the near future, and farmers are strongly urged to push ahead with the ploughing in order to obtain early payments of the grant.

With regard to the question of the person eligible to apply for the ploughing-up grant the importance of the following points is especially stressed:—

The ploughing grant is payable to the person at whose expense the land has been ploughed or otherwise broken up and brought into a state of cleanliness and fertility for the sowing of an approved crop of 1940. Where an owner has had the grassland ploughed up at his own expense prior to letting it to another person who has carried out the subsequent cultivation Section 29 (1) of the Agricultural Development Act, 1939, applies, viz.—

> "A ploughing grant to be made in respect of any land shall be made to the person at whose expense the land has been ploughed up, and has been or is being or is to be dealt with as aforesaid, or, if one or more of these operations has been or is being or is to be carried out at the expense of one person and one or more of them at the expense of another person, shall be divided amongst them as the appropriate Minister may direct".

In the case of land let in conacre the person renting it will normally be entitled to claim for the grant if that person performs all the necessary cultivations, including ploughing.

There is no maximum limit to the amount of land for which grants can be claimed by any one farmer, but it is emphasised that an area of less than two statute acres is not eligible.

COMPULSORY TILLAGE ORDER.

Despite the good response under the voluntary scheme of grants the attainment of the full object will require strenuous effort by everyone concerned, and in reply to a question in the House of Commons on the 7th November, the Minister emphasised that there was no intention of the provisions of the Tillage Order being in any way relaxed. He reminded farmers that in their own interests they must plough every acre possible, because if only the minimum required by the Order were ploughed it would probably be necessary to issue a further Order requiring a higher proportion of the land to be put under the plough.

The special attention of farmers is directed to the following points connected with the Compulsory Tillage Order.

I. First Crop Hay.

Farmers should clearly understand that where grassland is ploughed up and sown down to grass in 1940, along with a grain crop, the subsequent hay crop in the year 1941 will not be deemed to be cultivation in the latter year for the purposes of any further Compulsory Tillage Order that may be made by the Ministry.

Farmers are, therefore, advised when they plough up grassland for cropping in 1940 not to sow grass seeds on such land with the grain crops.

II. Area to be Cultivated in 1940.

Farmers are aware that first year's hay forming part of a normal crop rotation counts as tillage under the Compulsory Tillage Order. Second year's hay, however, does not count as tillage either in 1939 or in 1940. Every occupier, therefore, who had an area on his holding under a crop of first year's hay in 1939 will be required to plough up for cropping in 1940 an amount of grassland equivalent to such area, over and above the additional one-tenth of the arable land on his holding. The following example will, it is hoped, make this point clear.

On a holding of 50 acres there were 10 acres under tillage in 1939, comprising 6 acres of grain and root crops, and 4 acres of first crop hay. The area which requires to be placed under cultivation on this holding in 1940 is 15 acres, i.e. 10 acres plus one-tenth of 50 acres.

Some farmers might be under the impression that 11 acres would be the quota of tillage on the above farm in 1940, i.e. one-tenth of 50=5 acres, plus an area equivalent to the 6 acres under grain and root crops in 1939. This is, of course, entirely wrong, as the 4 acres which were under first crop hay are reckoned as tillage in 1939 and must be taken into account in precisely the same way as the 6 acres of grain and root crops.

III. Manuring of Grassland.

It has come to the notice of the Ministry that some farmers are under the impression that if they manure some of their arable land which is now in grass, the area so manured will be counted towards the area in crops. This is, of course, quite wrong, and at complete variance with the terms of the Compulsory Tillage Order.

It should be clearly understood that the only land which can be reckoned as being cultivated in 1940 is land which is either under crops (grain, roots or flax) and first year's rotation grass whether cut for hay or grazed. Grass, whether manured or not, cannot be reckoned as a crop.

TRACTORS.

It was announced in the October issue that the Ministry was making arrangements for a large number of additional tractors to be made available in Northern Ireland. There are grassland districts where reliance must be placed almost entirely on tractors, and even in tillage districts tractors will be necessary to supplement horses. There are many farmers who are eager to get on with their ploughing, but who have been finding it difficult to obtain tractors or ploughs. They will be glad to know that a number of Fordson tractors are now available, and a two-furrow tractor plough can be had with each tractor. These tractors will be sold through the usual trade channels in the districts where they are most needed. Accordingly, farmers wishing to buy tractors should place their orders with an agent in the normal way.

Regarding tractors which are supplied through the Ministry, two conditions will be imposed.

(1) The agent who sells the tractor must obtain the Ministry's authority before the tractor is delivered to the buyer. Special preference will be given to purchasers being in districts where tractors are most needed.

(2) Buyers of such tractors will be required to agree to plough, cultivate and cut with a self-binder at least 100 acres of grain crops at approved charges.

The Ministry does not propose to hire out tractors. A farmer wishing to hire should consult his County War Agricultural Executive Officer, who has a list of tractor owners who can undertake work for hire. Tractor owners are urged to co-operate as fully as possible with these officers in order that the fullest use may be made of the available machines. Particulars of the County War Organisations can be obtained from the Ministry. Buyers of tractors from agents supplied through the Ministry are required to sign an undertaking not to exceed certain charges for work done for hire. The maximum charges are as follows:—For ploughing stubble land, or land that has been cropped with potatoes or roots, 16/- per statute acre; for ploughing old lea grassland, 21/- per statute acre; for disc harrowing or cultivating, 6/- per hour. These charges will be reviewed at the end of December.

Farmers who cannot conveniently pay cash for tractors are to be assisted by the Ministry's hire-purchase scheme. In such cases a sum equal to at least

one quarter of the price must be lodged by the applicant, the balance being re-payable in quarterly instalments payable over a period of three years.

Constant attention is being devoted to the supply of tractor implements for spring cultivation and of farm machinery which will be needed for harvesting the extra corn crops to be grown next year. At the moment the most urgent need is for tractor ploughs, but it is hoped that further deliveries will be made in the near future.

While the Ministry will continue to render every possible assistance, it feels it essential to stress that farmers and tractor owners should decide at once what implements and machines they will require for next year and place their orders with implement makers without delay in order to ensure that supplies will be available when required. Binder twine and threshing outfits should also be ordered now.

Finally, farmers are again reminded that if ploughing is delayed until spring, tractor owners may not be able to cope with the demand for their services. Again, the work may be held up by bad weather. It is important, therefore, that ploughing should be pushed forward now in order that the extra acreage may be ready for sowing when seed time arrives.

Do not put off till to-morrow
What you can Till to-day.

MARKETING SCHEMES AND ENACTMENTS.

PIGS (PROVISIONAL PRICES) (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER, 1939.

FIXED PRICES.

An Order entitled the Pigs (Provisional Prices) (Northern Ireland) Order, 1939, made under Regulation 55 of the Defence Regulations, 1939, provided that as from the 14th October, 1939, no person in Northern Ireland shall sell, or agree to sell, or offer or expose for sale, or buy or agree to buy or offer to buy, any pig for slaughter or curing except at the prices quoted in Col. 1 below.

By an amendment to the Order, the prices in Col. II were in operation as from the 8th November, 1939.

	Fixed Prices.	
	Col. I. 14th October. per dead cwt.	Col. II. 8th November. per dead cwt.
Pigs other than Sows, Rigs, Stags and Boars.		
Weighing up to c.1.2.2 dead weight ...	78/5	84/–
Weighing from c.1.2.3—c.2.0.0 ...	74/–	79/6
Weighing over 2 cwt.	69/8	75/3
Sows	58/4	58/4
Rigs	67/2	72/9
Stags	50/5	50/5
Boars	28/–	28/–

The authorised deductions are as follows:—

Pigs Marketing Board administrative levy 8d. per pig.

Insurance deduction to cover insurance, in the event of a carcase being condemned as unfit for human consumption, 4d. per pig in the case of dead pigs, and 7d. per pig in the case of live pigs.

These prices are for delivery at a market or live pig collecting depot, or a railway station, as arranged between the buyer and seller. If live pigs are delivered by the seller to the buyer otherwise than as aforesaid the price of

each pig shall be increased by any sum actually paid by the seller for any such delivery by rail, or, where no part of such delivery is by rail, the sum of 8d. per pig.

AGRICULTURAL MARKETING (PIG INDUSTRY) ACT (N.I.), 1934.

GRADING STATISTICS.

(1) Dead Pigs.

Table showing the percentage of pig carcases for the Roll and Ham cure within the weight and grade classes indicated during August, 1939.

Under c.1.0.21		c.1.0.21 to c.1.1.13					c.1.1.14 to c.1.2.3					
Suitable	Un-suitable	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	U.L. & U.F.	U.	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	U.L. & U.F.	U.	Totals
1.03	.23	2.66	1.54	.36	.22	.01	4.81	6.40	2.34	1.08	.04	20.72

Grade A.				Grade B.				Grade C.				
1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	
9.03	19.50	2.78	.52	6.96	20.41	4.04	.88	2.20	7.94	1.10	.28	75.64

Ungraded Carcases.

Under Grade A measurements. U.L.	Over Grade C measurements U.F.	Wholly condemned U.1.	Wholly black, injured or damaged U.2.	Overweights, boars, sows, etc. X.	Partly Black Y.	
.10	2.41	.01	.48	.63	.01	3.64
					TOTAL	100%

These figures have been calculated from the purchase and grading statements which the curers furnished to the Ministry.

The standard price, as fixed by the Pig Industry Council, was lower than in July, and the realised price per cwt., less levy and contribution charges, was reduced by 9d. to 58/11d. The average weight per pig was 3 lbs. lighter at c.1.2.19, and the average price per carcase was 2/9d. less than in July at £4 18s. 2d

COST OF STANDARD PIG RATION.

The average retail cash price per cwt. of the standard ration for the sixteen weeks' period ended 21st October, 1939, was 8/7½d. The average price for the similar period ended 23rd September, was 8/4d. These figures have been calculated by the Ministry from returns collected from ten representative centres in Northern Ireland.

The following is the ration upon which the feeding cost is based:—

Maize Meal	30%
Barley Meal	30%
White Pollards	20%
White Bran	10%
Meat Meal (60% Protein) ...	10%

PRICES OF FAT STOCK IN GREAT BRITAIN.

The following maximum prices of fat stock were fixed by an Order of the Ministry of Food, and are now in operation:—

Fat Cattle

(1) Quality standard, 57 per cent. and over	...	48/– per live cwt.
(2) Quality standard, 54 to 56 per cent.	...	44/– „
(3) Ordinary standard, 57 per cent. and over	...	44/– „
(4) Ordinary standard, 54 to 56 per cent.	...	40/– „
(5) Other cattle, 53 per cent. and under	...	37/– „

Lambs ... 11½d. per lb. estimated dressed carcase weight.
Sheep ... 10d. „ „ „
Ewes and Rams 6d. „ „ „
Pigs ... ... 14/– per score up to 10 score until 8th inst., then 15/–.
13/6 per score above that weight until 8th inst., then 14/6.

BUTTER.

WHOLESALE AND RETAIL PRICES.

The following maximum prices, as fixed by the Ministry of Food, were in operation during the month of October.

First hand price, "ex store"—145/- per cwt. in bulk.
Wholesale price delivered—152/- per cwt. in bulk.
Retail price—1/7d. per lb.

The maximum charge which a retailer may make for packing butter has been priced at the figure of 6/- per cwt.

MARKETING OF EGGS ACTS (N.I.) 1924—1937.

NORTHERN IRELAND EGG PRICES.

The following table shows the prices fixed by the Ministry, and payable by licensed wholesale dealers, for eggs purchased from producers during the weeks specified, as compared with the prices fixed for the corresponding weeks of 1938.

	1939				1938			
	Hen eggs per lb.*		Duck eggs per doz.*		Hen eggs per lb.		Duck eggs per doz.	
	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.
October 7th	1	0¾	1	6	0	11¾	1	4
,, 14th	1	1	1	6	1	1	1	4½
,, 21st	1	2	1	7	1	2	1	5½
,, 28th	1	4½	1	9	1	4	1	4½
November 4th ...	1	4½	1	9	1	4	1	6

* Where hen eggs are delivered by the producer to the packing store of a licensed Wholesale dealer of Class A an additional ½d. per lb. is payable; in the case of duck eggs an additional ¾d. is payable for each complete dozen so delivered.

Payment on a quality basis came into operation during the week ended 5th March, 1938.

The following were the standard deductions :—

Hen Eggs : Seconds and soiled eggs, ½d. per egg; Rejects 1½d. per egg during the week ended 7th October, for the weeks ending on the 14th October and 21st October 1¾d. per egg, afterwards 2d. per egg.

Duck Eggs : Rejects 1½d. per egg during the first three weeks of October, afterwards 1¾d. per egg.

EGGS.

MAXIMUM PRICES.

WHOLESALE AND RETAIL.

The maximum prices, as fixed by the Ministry of Food, came into operation on the dates mentioned.

Category I. Home Produced Fresh Eggs.

	Maximum Price on sale by wholesale per 120 eggs.						Maximum Price on sale by retail per dozen eggs.					
	13-9-39		23-10-39		6-11-39		13-9-39		23-10-39		6-11-39	
	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.
(*a*) Weighing not less than 15 lb. per 120	22	0	24	6	27	0	2	6	2	9	3	0
(*b*) Weighing not less than 12 lb. per 120	17	0	19	6	22	0	2	0	2	3	2	6
(*c*) Weighing under 12 lb. per 120	12	6	14	9	17	0	1	6	1	9	2	0
Category II. Cold Stored, Pickled, and Preserved Eggs.												
(*a*) Weighing not less than 15 lb. per 120	12	6	12	6	14	9	1	6	1	6	1	9
(*b*) Weighing not less than 12 lb. per 120	10	6	10	6	12	6	1	3	1	3	1	6

POTATOES.

(The situation in regard to control, as announced by the Ministry of Food on 27th October).

Supplies of Ware.—Since the outbreak of war the only intervention in the ordinary methods of potato distribution which has proved necessary has been the publication of a Maximum Prices Order. The Ministry of Food continues to watch the situation closely but, in the present conditions, it is proposed to continue with a minimum of interference with ordinary channels of distribution and trade practices. Should it be essential to assume a more direct control of the movement of supplies, it is intended, within practical limits, to permit distributors to specify their requirements by variety and soil classification as well as to select the place of delivery. Every opportunity will be taken to consult producers and distributors as and when changes in methods of distribution and control are required.

Supplies of Seed.—Every endeavour is being made to allow the trade in seed potatoes to flow through normal channels so that buyers will be able to obtain supplies from recognised merchants and to specify grade, variety and district. It will be necessary, however, in the near future to make regulations regarding prices and stipulations regarding size, some of which may affect contracts not completed. An official Order will shortly be issued clarifying the situation, and further plans are being prepared to ensure adequate and suitable supplies for the 1940 potato crop.

WHEAT ACTS, 1932 AND 1939.

MINISTRY OF FOOD ANNOUNCEMENT OF WHEAT PRICES.

The Wheat (Prices) Order, which came into force on the 3rd November, makes provision for three distinct matters. In the first place it fixes a uniform price of 31/6d. per quarter (of 504 lbs.) for any millable wheat sold by a grower registered under the Wheat Acts. This price is 7/6d. higher than the price at which flour mills were purchasing English wheat until recently.

Secondly, the Order specifies the maximum price at which wheat, which is used for animal feeding as well as for flour milling, may be sold by any person other than a registered grower in lots of 18 quarters (approximately 4 tons) and upwards. This price is 32/3d. per quarter. A scale of permissive additional charges is provided for sales in smaller lots. For example, 9d. per quarter extra may be charged when a lot of between nine and eighteen quarters is sold, and 1/- per quarter, i.e. an additional 3d. per quarter, for lots of between four quarters and nine quarters. Following the parallel of the Feeding Stuffs (Maximum Prices) Order there are permitted maximum additions when wheat is taken into and delivered out of store.

Thirdly, a maximum price is prescribed for non-millable wheat, a term which includes damaged wheat only fit for the preparation of feeding stuffs as well as "tailings". The permissive additional charges apply to non-millable wheat also.

The prescribed prices are for net cash, an extra charge for credit being permitted on condition that the discount for cash is shown on the invoice. Transport charges and the customary sack charges are for the buyer's account, as hitherto. It should be noted that the Order does not affect the general provisions of the Wheat Acts, which remain in force.

NOTE ON THE ABOVE PRICES OF HOME-GROWN WHEAT.

The Wheat (Maximum Price) Order, issued on 30th October by the Ministry of Food is important both to farmers who grow wheat and to those who use wheat for feeding to livestock. Under the Order the price to be paid to a wheat grower for home-grown millable wheat is fixed at 31/6d. per quarter of 504 lbs. (7/- per cwt.), all transport and customary sack charges being for account of the buyer. Intermediate charges may be added if the wheat is bought by a merchant for re-sale. The new market price is an advance of 7/6d. per quarter on the price that flour millers had been authorised by the Cereals Control Board to pay during the past six weeks. This market price will be maintained at the new level for a considerable time, and is not likely to be altered before next spring.

The increase of 7/6d. per quarter in the price of home-grown wheat will necessarily have the effect of raising substantially the average price of wheat for the cereal year. Therefore those farmers who sold their wheat at the lower prices of the month of August, and of the past six weeks, would under existing conditions receive a deficiency payment from the Wheat Commission which, with their market price, would be substantially less than the standard price under the Wheat Act. To avoid hardship as the result of these conditions it has been decided to seek authority to amend the Wheat Acts so that the deficiency payment will be based, not as at present on the average price of wheat over the whole cereal year, but upon the average price realised during shorter periods in the cereal year. These shorter periods would coincide as nearly as possible with the periods during which there is no substantial change in the market price of home-grown wheat, and deficiency payments will be calculated at a separate rate for the growers who dispose of wheat in each period. For example, the price payable by flour millers was fixed at 24/- per quarter on 8th September. The first short period would run from 1st August to 7th September; the second period from 8th September to 19th October, i.e. the date upon which the new price of 31/6d. per quarter was announced. The third period would start on 20th October. A separate deficiency payment would be determined for each of these periods so that the total which the seller

in each period would receive in market price plus deficiency payment would be approximately the same for each period. No seller in one period would be at an advantage or a disadvantage as compared with a seller in another period. The Agricultural Ministers might, of course, find it desirable to close a period at any time and start another one, even though there might not be a substantial change in wheat prices.

The circumstances under which in the first week of the war farmers were asked to hold their wheat in stack no longer apply, and farmers should now regard themselves as at liberty to market their wheat. They will do so in the knowledge that they will not be placed in a less favourable financial position than they would be if they sold their wheat later in the cereal year. In the changed circumstances it would indeed be in the public interest for farmers to thresh and market their wheat freely during the present autumn.

The general provisions of the Wheat Acts are in no way affected by the modifications now announced, and it will still be necessary, for example, for farmers to get their wheat certified by authorised merchants, who include most flour millers, in order to secure deficiency payments.

HIGHER STANDARD PRICES FOR WHEAT AND OATS TO ENCOURAGE INCREASED PRODUCTION.

An increase of 10 per cent. in the standard price of wheat from 45/- to 49/6d. per quarter, and in the standard price of oats from 24/- to 27/- per quarter, was announced by Mr. W. S. Morrison on Wednesday, 8th November, in the British House of Commons.

The barley market will remain free because the reduction of imports has created a strong demand for home-grown barley, both for malting and feeding purposes, and the current prices are satisfactory to growers.

Mr. Morrison explained that heavy demands have been made on our agriculturists to extend their arable farming. This branch of farming, and in particular the production of cereals, has been depressed. There has been a continuous decline in arable acreage for many years, and one of the difficulties about expanding arable production now is the inability of many farmers to meet, from their present resources, the extra outlay involved; or to run the risks involved in increasing production at pre-war price levels.

In view of the need for encouraging arable farming and of assisting farmers to expand production, as they are anxious to do, the Government, he said, have decided to ask Parliament to approve the necessary amendment to the Wheat Acts, and an Order under the Agricultural Development Act to enable the standard price of wheat sold in the current cereal year to be raised from 10/- to 11/- per cwt. (i.e. from 45/- to 49/6d. per quarter of 504 lbs.), and the standard price of oats of the 1939 crop from 8/- to 9/- per cwt. (i.e. from 24/- to 27/- per quarter of 336 lbs.).

ADVANCE PAYMENT TO REGISTERED GROWERS ON ACCOUNT OF DEFICIENCY PAYMENTS FOR 1939/40.

In accordance with bye-law 31 of Wheat Bye-laws 1932 the Wheat Commission has given notice that they will make an advance payment to registered growers who made proper applications on valid wheat certificates delivered to the Commission on or before Friday, the 3rd November, 1939, in respect of sales made not later than 20th October, 1939. This advance payment is on account of the deficiency payments that will become due under the Wheat Acts for the cereal year ending 31st July, 1940. It will be made on or about Saturday, 25th November, 1939, and will be at the rate of 3/- per cwt., equal to 13/6d. per quarter of 504 lbs., which is the same advance payment as was made by the Wheat Commission in the middle of October.

The address of the Wheat Commission is Brooklands House, Weybridge, Surrey.

FLAX CONTROL.

The following information is reprinted for the benefit of flax growers.

The Control of Flax (No. 5) Order provides:—

(1) All flax will be graded and paid for at the market, and there will be no buying at the mills.

The farmer, on receipt of his cheque in payment, will be able to go to any bank in the town in which the market is being held, and draw cash against the cheque straight away. There will, therefore, be no delay in payment, but cheques must be presented at the bank by the farmer personally.

(2) A staff to grade the flax will be appointed, all of whom were regular buyers in the markets in normal years. A number of these graders will attend each market according to the requirements of that market.

INSPECTOR'S DECISION FINAL.

(3) In each market there will be an inspector in charge of the grading staff, who will act as referee in any case of difference as to the grading of flax, and whose decision shall be final.

(4) No flax will be graded unless the owner produces a form of declaration, which he must obtain from the scutch mill owner. The scutch mill owners will obtain these forms from the flax balers in the various market towns.

(5) Flax once brought to the market shall not be withdrawn.

(6) The usual market tickets will be used, and the methods of taking in checking, etc., will be as usual.

(7) Captain C. H. Murland has been appointed as administrator, and he will have charge of all inspectors and grades, and will periodically visit all the markets.

(8) Arrangements will be made to grade flax in the most suitable market districts.

SIX GRADES.

(9) Flax will be divided into six grades, as follows:—

No. 1	16s.	6d.	per stone in the market.
2	15s.	0d.	,, ,,
3	13s.	9d.	,, ,,
4	12s.	6d.	,, ,,
5	11s.	3d.	,, ,,
6	10s.	0d.	,, ,,

Flax not good enough for No. 6 Grade will be taken at a relative price.

(10) Flax not properly scutched will be sent back for re-cleaning.

(11) All flax must be in each market on the dates appointed before 10 o'clock a.m., otherwise it will not be graded in that particular week.

(12) Arrangements with regard to re-scutched tow will be announced at an early date.

(13) Notice will be given through the Press as to the dates on which the various markets will be held.

(14) All communications in connection with this Order should be addressed to the Ministry of Supply, Flax Purchasing Section, City Hall Chambers, 53, Donegall Place, Belfast.

WOOL CONTROL.

Since the outbreak of war the Minister of Supply, acting under the Defence Regulations, has issued a number of Control of Wool Orders, and the following summary may be of help to those in the wool trade in Northern Ireland.

As from September 1st all traders must be prepared to furnish the Minister of Supply with whatever information he may demand. On 22nd October all licences previously granted by the Ministry of Supply were revoked, and all sales of wool made subject to its orders. Every person owning or disposing of wool must send to the Controller, Wool Control, Bradford, a written declaration of the description and quantities of wool which he may possess, while he must comply with that Ministry's directions as to removal, transport and delivery. These Orders, however, will not interfere with the freedom of carriers or warehousemen in the trade to carry out their normal business.

As from 29th October the following schedule of maximum prices for British wools has been fixed:—

BRITISH WOOLS—IN THE FLEECE (Selected and Graded).

No.	*Description*	*Maximum Price Pence*
14	Lincoln Wethers (Washed)	13¾
15	Selected Kent Wethers (Greasy)	12½
16	Norfolk Half-Bred Hogs (Greasy)	11¾
17	Selected Cheviot Ewes (Greasy)	13¼
18	Selected Blackfaced (Greasy)	9¾
19	Selected Welsh Fleeces (Washed)	12¾
20	Shorn Kent Lambs (Greasy, sorted)	12¼

Prices have not yet been fixed for raw wool, but farmers holding supplies are not permitted to dispose of them in the meantime to private buyers.

It has come to the notice of the Ministry of Agriculture that certain sales of this year's wool clip have taken place recently. The Ministry advises all sheep owners who have not yet sold their wool to refrain from doing so until further notice, as the Wool Control will purchase all that is left of this year's clip at the fixed prices.

Further enquiries should be addressed to The Controller, The Wool Control, Bradford.

Copies of the Ministry of Supply's Orders may be purchased from H.M. Stationery Office or through any bookseller.

MILK AND MILK PRODUCTS ACTS (N.I.)

1934 AND 1936.

The Joint Milk Council has decided to increase the retail price of milk by 4d. per gallon as from Sunday, 19th November. This increase applies to the County Boroughs of Belfast and Londonderry, the Boroughs of Bangor and Newtownards, and certain neighbouring areas. The wholesale prices have been increased by 3d. per gallon as from this date.

AGRICULTURAL NOTES.

SEASONAL FARM NOTES.

PLOUGHING.—Ploughing should be pushed ahead when weather and soil conditions are suitable. Under the Tillage Order each occupier of land is required to have under cultivation in 1940 at least one-tenth of the total arable area more than in 1939, and provides that the total acreage of the crops, including first crop rotation hay, grown in 1940 shall be at least one-tenth more than the acreage of such crops grown in 1939. The Order further requires all occupiers of land to have at least one-fifth of the total arable area under crops in 1940. The ploughing of lea should be carried out as soon as possible. Early ploughing exposes the soil to winter frosts, and thus aids considerably in obtaining a good tilth and in facilitating the preparation of the seed bed in spring; it also gives more time for the old sod to decay, and thus helps when the time comes to prepare the land for the following crop. When ploughing lea a skim coulter should be used so that the grass will be completely turned down and covered.

In the case of very rich land which is being broken up from pasture as, for example, grassland in which there is an abundance of wild white clover, it may be an advantage to take a crop of potatoes or roots, instead of a corn crop, in the first year, owing to the likelihood of a corn crop being seriously affected by lodging if grown on such land. Where it is proposed to grow potatoes or roots after lea, the method of dealing with the old sod will depend to a large extent on the nature of the sod and of the soil. If there is a mat of grass on the surface and the soil is of a heavy nature the best plan is to plough the lea as deeply as the nature of the subsoil permits, using a skim coulter to turn down the grass underneath the overturned furrows, and to prepare the land for drilling without touching the old sod. When such a method is adopted the making of the "back" should be begun by ploughing two "scraws" to make a shallow "hint". These "scraws" should be scattered over the land so that they will be turned down with the ploughing. The back can then be made by turning two furrows into the "hint" already opened. In other words there should be no unploughed land left underneath the centre of the "back" as would be the case when ploughing lea land for a corn crop. With this method the ploughed land should be well rolled to firm the furrows before cultivation begins. If the soil is of a kindly nature and the grass sod fairly bare and easily broken, the field can be ploughed lightly and the furrows thoroughly broken up with harrows, after which the ground should again be ploughed to the normal depth. This second ploughing turns down the pulverised but undecayed sods, and with this method also the subsequent cultivations should be shallow so as to avoid bringing up the sods to the surface. Another method which can be practised in the case of fresh fields

where the sod is brittle and the grass bare, is to disc harrow the surface in both directions before ploughing, and then to plough the land to the normal depth with a plough fitted with a skim coulter to turn down the broken up grass sods.

With all three methods of ploughing it is quite easy to prepare the ground for the making of drills, but it is essential to use a skim coulter on the plough and to turn the furrows over fairly flat.

Lime.—Where lime has not been applied for some years to ground which is being ploughed up it would be advisable to apply a dressing of from 15 cwt. to 1 ton of burnt lime per statute acre, after the ground has been ploughed. This is particularly necessary where the soil tends to be heavy and sticky or where it is proposed to sow barley or turnips. Lime should not be applied to land intended for potatoes. All land which is being laid out to grass should receive a dressing of burnt lime at the rate of from 20 to 30 cwt. per statute acre after the ground has been ploughed for the last crop of the rotation. It is again emphasised that lime should not be applied to unploughed land and ploughed down. It should always be kept as near as possible to the surface of the soil. Supplies of lime can be obtained under the Land Fertility Scheme, which is still in operation. Lists giving the names and addresses of producers and distributors approved under the scheme can be seen at any Creamery or Police Barracks.

Farmyard Manure.—In order to utilise labour during the slack season, and to lighten the rush of spring work as much as possible, farmyard manure should be carted out during the winter as it is made, and built into a compact heap in or near the field intended for potatoes and roots next year, so as to have it handy for spreading in the drills in spring. It may be found advantageous in some cases to spread the manure over the stubble and plough it in; this system is useful on the stiffer classes of soils. Farmers should take care that the liquid portion of the manure is not wasted. This should either be collected in suitable tanks, and spread over the fields with a distributor, or be conserved by absorbing it in litter or peat mould.

Farmyard manure not required for roots should be used to topdress fields for hay or fields of grass. It is not advisable to top-dress ground for cereals with farmyard manure, except in the case of very poor land, as this treatment would tend to encourage a very rank growth of straw, thus increasing the risk of lodging of the crop before harvest.

Grassland.—Much can be done to increase the productivity of poor grassland by applying a dressing of phosphatic manure during autumn. Semsol, basic slag, and Gafsa rock phosphate are suitable kinds of phosphatic manures for this purpose, and dressings of from 5 to 8 cwt. per statute acre, depending on the condition of the pasture and on available supplies, can be used. Under

the Land Fertility Scheme one quarter of the cost of British-made basic slag, and one quarter of the cost of carriage, can be obtained as a subsidy if the manure is bought from an approved supplier, and at least 2 tons obtained and applied. The ground should be thoroughly harrowed before the manure is applied, to remove moss and decayed grass. These prevent the circulation of air around the roots of the pasture plants, and hinder the manure from reaching the soil. Grassland which was dressed with a phosphatic manure last autumn will benefit from a dressing of lime at the rate of about 20 cwt. of burnt lime per statute acre applied during the present season.' In view of the extra land which will be under tillage next year it is most important that the reduced area under grass should be made as productive as possible. Now is the time to set about doing this. Further information about the management and improvement of grassland is given in Leaflet No. 90.

Artificial Fertilisers.—Farmers are advised to order supplies of fertilisers early in the season so as to ensure obtaining them in good time. Under present conditions it is essential that each farmer should make a careful estimate of the quantity of each kind of fertiliser required. This estimate should be based on the normal requirements, and is necessary so that full use will be made of available supplies. Farmers who have any difficulty in this respect should communicate with the Area Officer for the district, who will give full advice as to the best use of the fertilisers.

Seeds.—It is also essential for farmers to obtain supplies of seeds in good time. Only first-class seed should be used for the 1940 crops, and as there is likely to be a large demand for good seed, farmers who leave off ordering till the usual time may be disappointed. The Area Officer for the district will be able to help in regard to suitable sources from which seed for the different crops may be obtained.

Seed potatoes should be selected now. Only tubers from certified crops should be reserved for planting. The seed should be placed in sprouting boxes, and these stored in frost-proof houses. As soon as the tubers begin to sprout they should be exposed to sunlight so that short, sturdy sprouts will be produced.

Lists giving the names and addresses of growers of certified crops of potatoes can be obtained from the Ministry, free of charge. Where it is intended to grow potatoes for sale as seed the use of stock seed is strongly recommended. A list giving the names and addresses of farmers who had crops of potatoes suitable for stock seed can also be obtained, free of charge, from the Ministry.

Farm Improvement Work.—During the winter months there is often time to carry out many improvements on the farm, such as draining, fencing, etc. Advantage should be taken of the Ministry's Land Improvement Scheme

under which grants can be obtained towards the cost of labour, especially for the drainage of wet patches of land which may thus be brought into cultivation. In such cases tile drains are most satisfactory, but stone drains are also very successful and economical where stones can be obtained conveniently. Sod drains are also fairly satisfactory, but do not remain effective so long as tile or stone drains.

Care of Fences.—Usually at this time of year time may be found to patch up old fences. As a result of the Tillage Order much grassland not usually cultivated will be under cultivation next year, and a little time spent now in repairing and renewing defective fences will save much damage resulting from trespass by stock if the fences are not made good. Now is the time to clean up all "sheughs" along hedges which have become overgrown with briars and other undergrowth. This cleaning up should not be neglected, as these areas harbour various parasites of farm crops over the winter, and are also a common cause of flooding. The cleaning up can be easily done by using a light hedge knife or a good hook. Hedges should also be kept trimmed, and overgrown hedges should be "laid".

Restoration of Hedges.—Hedges which are allowed to grow up become thin at the bottom and do not make an adequate fence for cattle or sheep. A proper fence will be obtained only if there is a thick growth at the bottom of the hedge.

A hedge which has become over-grown should be treated in the following manner. First, all undesirable plants such as briars, honeysuckle, etc., should be taken out by the root, if possible, and all decayed stumps removed. The dyke or ditch back should be cleared out, the bank repaired if necessary, and the hedge then "laid".

In "laying" a hedge the idea to be aimed at should be to utilise only as many of the plants as are necessary to make a good framework fence when they are laid horizontally along the bank. The plants in the hedge should be inspected, and those of a vigorous type which arise from near the base of stumps and which are fairly straight and long, selected for laying. Plants which are in excess of those required for laying should be cut out at ground level, but one should be left at intervals of every two feet and cut off about 3 feet above the ground. If there are gaps in the hedge, and it is not possible to leave these growing stumps at 2 feet intervals, stakes should be cut from the plants removed and driven into the ground where the gaps occur, so as to form with the growing stumps a continuous row of stakes at 2 feet intervals.

The young shoots selected for laying should then be cut half-way through with an upward cut where possible, bent downwards away from the cut side and interlaced between the stumps. It is a mistake to lay too many plants

horizontally, as room will be required for the young growths which develop from the stumps and from the laid plants. When the laying has been completed the smaller protruding twigs should be trimmed. If there is any tendency on the part of the laid shoots to spring upwards they may be secured by interweaving thin hazel rods between the tops of the stakes.

Once a hedge has been properly laid it can be kept in good condition for many years by annual trimming. The trimming should be carried out with a proper, well-sharpened hedge knife. All cuttings should be done from the bottom upwards with an upward swing of the knife. The ultimate object of the trimming should be to form a wedge-shaped hedge, wide at the foot and narrow at the top.

SEASONAL LIVESTOCK NOTES.

Foods.—Farmers who, in recent years, have become accustomed to depending on supplies of imported feeding stuffs for their stock may find it difficult to meet the changed conditions. It should, however, be realised by all farmers that it is essential to maintain both the quality and numbers of stock, especially the breeding stock. The management of stock should be considered very carefully so as to make the best possible use of available foods, both home-grown and imported, and farmers who are experiencing difficulty in obtaining supplies this winter should make arrangements to grow more food in 1940 for their stock next winter. The Area Officer for the district will advise with regard to making the best use of present supplies and also with regard to the crops to grow which will provide a suitable supply of food for next winter.

Dairy Cows.—The cows should be given the best hay available on the farm with an allowance of cabbage or kale. The meals available should be reserved for heavy milking cows and those approaching calving. Cows giving less than two gallons of milk per day need not be given a meal allowance if good hay and cabbage are being fed.

The cows should be offered water at least three times per day and when the weather is fine the cows will benefit from a few hours out each day.

A daily grooming of the cows with currycomb and brush will help to keep the coat in a good condition and assist the circulation of the blood.

Store Cattle.—Store cattle can be allowed to spend the winter out-of-doors in most districts, provided that there is a dry shed for them to lie in at night and during wet periods. The shed should have a good roof and sides, and a dry, well-bedded floor. The question as to whether the cattle will require hand feeding or not will depend on the supply of grass available but in most cases hand feeding should not be necessary.

Pigs.—The meal allowance for pigs may be supplemented by feeding boiled unsaleable potatoes at the rate of 1 lb. of potatoes to 1 lb. of meal mixture for younger pigs and up to 4 lb. of potatoes to 1 lb. of meal mixture for older pigs. Where supplies of feeding stuffs are limited a certain amount of saving could be effected by killing the pigs at a lighter weight as older pigs give a smaller live-weight gain per lb. of meal than young pigs.

Young Pigs.—Special attention should be given to winter litters to ensure that they are kept warm and comfortable. When the young pigs begin to feed it is a great advantage, if supplies of separated milk or buttermilk are available, to give some warmed milk along with the meal mixture.

Breeding Sows.—Breeding sows which have a range over pasture fields can exist quite well on crushed oats and potatoes between litters or in the early stages of pregnancy. When suckling their litters or when heavy in pig the sows would benefit from a supply of separated milk in addition to the meal mixture. It is essential that the numbers of breeding sows be maintained and each old sow sold off should be replaced by a young sow or gilt.

Sheep.—The breeding flock should be changed to fresh grazing periodically on high, sound ground.

Where there is any suspicion of the likelihood of fluke being present in a pasture, the sheep should be dosed periodically with carbon tetrachloride capsules as advised in Leaflet No. 24. The sheep should also be examined frequently for symptoms of foot-rot disease and any which show signs of having this trouble should be treated at once, as the disease spreads rapidly amongst the flock. Useful information on sheep is given in the following leaflets:—

No. 47—The Care and Management of Sheep.

No. 63—Sheep:—Castration, Docking, Footrot, and Care of Feet.

No. 24—Fluke in Sheep.

SEASONAL GARDEN AND ORCHARD NOTES.

Preparation of Ground for Vegetables.—It is very desirable that all persons who have land should endeavour to grow enough vegetables next year to supply their own needs. The preparation of the ground should be undertaken as soon as possible so that when the time for sowing and planting arrives the soil may be well weathered. Where a choice can be made preference should be given to a somewhat heavy clay loam, for, given proper cultivation, such a soil produces good crops of vegetables. The absence of such a soil however should not deter anyone from attempting to do their best with the soil available. Possibly the only soils that should be avoided are shallow gravelly soils; these rarely yield crops of vegetables commensurate with the expense incurred in their cultivation and manuring.

Deep cultivation is essential to success in growing vegetables and this is best secured by the process known as double-digging. This is described in Leaflet No. 67.

Drainage.—The draining of any ground that requires it should be attended to now. The most satisfactory type of drain for the garden or orchard is the tile drain which if properly made should not require much attention for many years, provided the outlet is kept free of obstruction. Ditches and open drains should be cleaned and the outlets of drains cleared so that the drains may function properly during the winter.

Dead and decaying leaves should be removed from such vegetables as Brussels sprouts, broccoli, savoys, etc. The ground between the plants should be cleared of weeds at the same time. These treatments will enable the plants to withstand the winter.

Rhubarb.—Crowns intended for forcing should be lifted and left exposed for some time before being placed in the forcing quarters.

Fallen Leaves.—Leaves of deciduous trees should be collected and kept for use in making hot-bed material later. If they are not required for this purpose they may be added to the compost heap.

Planting Fruit Trees and Bushes.—Fruit trees and bushes may be planted whenever the soil is in a workable condition. It is advisable to get this work completed as soon as possible.

Manuring Apple Trees.—Trees in bearing condition will benefit from an annual dressing of potash if available at the rate of from 2 to 4 cwts. per acre. The prunings from trees and hedges should be burned and the resultant ashes spread, while still dry, on the surface of the ground around fruit trees. Although the potash content of the dry wood ash is low nevertheless it may be of considerable help in increasing the crop where other supplies of potash are not available. As the potash in wood ash is readily soluble in water the ashes should be spread before it gets washed out by rain.

THE UTILISATION OF GLASSHOUSES IN WAR TIME.

Even in normal times it is a good practice for those who own glasshouses which are used principally for the growing of tomatoes to utilise the houses for the production of other crops, but under present circumstances, when every effort to increase the food supply of the country must be made, this is imperative.

Glasshouses which have been devoted to the growing of tomatoes during the past summer should now be prepared for the growing of other useful food crops. The most useful crop to grow in glasshouses during the winter is lettuce, and plants raised from seed sown in boxes early in October will be

suitable for planting out in a glasshouse with the object of obtaining a crop of early lettuce when supplies of this valuable salad are most required. It is probable that the imports of early lettuce will be curtailed and therefore it is necessary that the supplies of home produced salads should be increased.

When a crop of lettuce is grown during the winter and early spring, in a greenhouse to be used for the growing of tomatoes next summer, it will be necessary to carry out the usual cleansing and disinfection of the house and the treatment of the soil before the lettuce is planted, as there will not be sufficient time to complete these operations after the lettuce crop has been cut and before the tomato plants are planted. Therefore, as soon as the houses have been cleared of the tomato plants the glass and woodwork should be thoroughly cleaned by scrubbing them both inside and outside with a good disinfectant such as cresylic acid (1 gallon emulsified cresylic acid to 40 gallons of water). During the work all doors and ventilators should be kept open but afterwards the houses may be kept tightly closed for a couple of days.

The soil in the houses should then be prepared as for next year's tomato crop. If it requires partial sterilisation this is best done by the use of steam. In the case of small houses, however, this is not practicable and the next best method is by the use of chemicals, such as formalin. One gallon of commercial formalin in 49 gallons of water is sufficient to treat from 10 to 18 square yards of soil. The solution should be applied to the soil with an ordinary watering can and the soil dug over the same day. This should be done several weeks before the time for planting the lettuce is due. In some cases it may be more economical to remove the old soil to a depth of 18 inches and to replace it with fresh soil taken from an old pasture field.

The young lettuce plants should be planted out early in December. Before planting out, each box of seedlings should be dipped in a tank of tepid water so as to soak the soil thoroughly without wetting the plants. The boxes should then be placed in the houses and left to drain for a couple of days before the actual planting is done. Care must be exercised in planting to avoid any damage to the young plants. The houses may be cold at the time of planting and heated in the spring so as to encourage early growth, but if possible it is advisable to have a little heat at planting time and for a few days afterwards. A temperature varying between 50°F. and 55°F. should be maintained. In unheated houses, of course, this may not be possible; the temperature will be entirely dependent on the weather.

If the soil was moderately damp at planting time no water should be required for some time. The plants, however, should not be allowed to wilt for lack of water.

SEASONAL POULTRY-KEEPING NOTES.

Most poultry-keepers are faced with the problem of how to make the best use of the limited supply of foods available, and it is essential that no food should be wasted. Wastage of food can take place in several ways such as the maintaining of unproductive birds, permitting pests such as rats and mice to eat the food, placing food in unsuitable receptacles or out of doors in wet weather, etc. By paying attention to points such as these it will be possible to obtain the best output of eggs from the foods available. It will probably not be possible to obtain the usual level of egg-production with a large flock but the number of birds should not be reduced beyond the culling out of unthrifty pullets, old hens and all other birds which are likely to be unproductive.

Culling.—It is always of great importance in good poultry management to cull out any birds which show signs of lack of vigour, or which do not appear to have the capacity required for good egg production; but at the present time it is of even greater importance that all unprofitable birds be culled out. By doing this more food will be available for the good layers, food supplies will be conserved, and egg production maintained at a reasonable level.

Home-Grown Foods.—Poultry-keepers who are experiencing difficulty now in obtaining certain purchased foods for their flocks should make plans for next season. Cereal crops such as oats, barley and wheat should be grown for the poultry and a small acreage of potatoes will provide very useful food to supplement the ration of grain and meals. Not only will the growing of crops provide food for the birds and make the poultry-keeper largely independent of purchased foods, but it will also freshen the soil, thus aiding in the control of diseases and pests and in the maintenance of the health of the birds. Poultry-keepers who have not sufficient land of their own may be able to rent land on the conacre or eleven months system for the production of food for their flocks.

Green Food for Layers.—It is now more important than ever to provide green food for the laying flock. Where fresh, clean grassland is available the poultry should be run on it and accommodated in portable houses which should be moved regularly over the field. Green food, in the form of turnip leaves, cabbage leaves, etc., is suitable for hens and should be given, especially where the birds are confined to a limited space. If the leaves are suspended so that the birds have to stretch up to get them this helps to keep the birds in a healthy condition, as well as keeping the food clean.

Feeding of Poultry.—Poultry-keepers need not worry unduly if it is not always possible to obtain all the meals which are usually included in a laying mixture, or if the proportions have to be changed. Hens are not particularly fastidious in the matter of food and can thrive and lay reasonably well when

fed on a variety of foods. The modern laying rations have been developed for the purpose of encouraging the maximum production, but satisfactory production can be obtained from good pullets and hens which are fed on plain, wholesome food.

Oats will always be the basic food for poultry and it is fortunate that no difficulties will be encountered in obtaining supplies. Ordinary ground oats is quite suitable for inclusion in a mixture of meals; it can take the place of Sussex ground oats. Kibbled maize is not an essential constituent of a grain mixture for poultry. Even maize meal is not indispensable and quite good mixtures can be made with only a small proportion of that foodstuff. Wheat is not an essential grain but if supplies of wheat screenings are available a quantity should be mixed with the oats for the grain ration.

A very good mixture for layers can be made from bran, pollard, ground oats and a little maize meal if available. If this mixture is wet with separated milk or buttermilk no fears need be entertained regarding the suitability of the feeding. Boiled potatoes in the proportion of one part by measure to 3 or 4 parts of mixture can be added if desired. Potatoes are much relished by poultry and may have a value which is not indicated by the chemical composition. When fed in reasonable proportion along with other foods, they seem to aid in maintaining the health of the birds. If fed to excess, however, they make the birds overfat and sluggish.

The use of wet mash is recommended in preference to dry mash under present conditions. Wet mash feeding is less wasteful of food than the dry mash method and can be controlled better. Besides, with the use of wet mash the house scraps, etc., can be utilised to the fullest extent in the feeding of the poultry.

If the proportion of maize meal in rations for poultry is restricted it is important to give the birds fresh greens daily, especially if they are not ranging over pasture. If this is not done there will be a likelihood of eggs having pale-coloured yolks being produced.

Drinking Water.—In order to keep up egg production and to maintain the health of the birds it is essential that a constant supply of fresh, clean water be provided. If this is not done the layers will be forced to look for drink in stagnant pools which may be a source of infection of disease. Often in cold, frosty weather the drinking water will be frozen and a watch should be kept during such times to see that the water supply is not cut off. It is advantageous, during very cold weather to heat the water slightly to ensure that the birds will drink sufficient for their requirements.

Litter.—As soiled eggs are classed as "seconds" and a deduction in price made in respect of them it is in the interests of the poultry keeper, and also largely within his power, to eliminate this source of loss. Eggs are generally

soiled by the hens' feet and legs after being laid. It is therefore important to keep the feet and legs of the birds clean. Th easiest method of doing this is to use ample clean litter and keep it changed frequently, never allowing the floor of the house to become sticky or damp. Such a condition of the floor litter also contributes to the appearance and spread of parasites and diseases.

Movable houses should be moved frequently so that the surrounding ground shall be dry and clean. This also aids in the production of clean eggs. Any eggs which are found to be soiled should be cleaned with a damp cloth as soon as possible after collection from the nests.

Feeding of Birds for Breeding.—In order to secure good hatching eggs and healthy chicks the stamina and vigour of the breeding birds are of the first importance. These are largely influenced by feeding, and hence particular attention should be paid to the feeding of the breeding stock. Fresh skim milk and buttermilk are very valuable for keeping the birds in a fit condition and where available should be given. It is most important, especially under existing conditions as regards foodstuffs, to run the breeding stock on fresh pasture and not to keep the birds in confined runs. Milk and green food provide essential nutrients for breeding birds and should be fed, if at all possible. Where skim milk or buttermilk is not being fed a mineral mixture should be added to the mash at the rate of 2 lbs. per cwt. of mash. A suitable mineral mixture is 2 parts (by weight) ground limestone, and 1 part common salt.

Mating.—It is essential that only birds of good constitution should be used for breeding. The importance of this cannot be over-emphasised. The flocks should be mated at least ten days before eggs for hatching are required. If in doubt as to the fertility of the eggs a hatch may be set under a hen before putting down incubator lots.

Selection and Storage of Eggs for Hatching.—When planning hatching it is important to bear in mind the housing accommodation available, as it is false economy to attempt to rear a large flock under crowded conditions. Again, the eggs to be set should be carefully selected, omitting eggs under 2 ozs. in weight, abnormally large eggs, eggs with thin shells and eggs of bad shape. Eggs for hatching should also be fresh—not over 1 week old—and, during the period between laying and setting, should be stored in an airy room having an even temperature which is not less than 40 degrees or more than 70 degrees Fahrenheit. Eggs which are left exposed to frost may be chilled and the hatchability destroyed. During storage, the eggs should be turned daily.

Management of Incubators.—After careful selection of breeding stock and eggs the next important item in securing a good hatch is the management of the incubator. Before setting, it is essential to see that the incubator is in good working order, paying particular attention to the capsule, thermometer and lamp burner. The incubator should be placed in a well-ventilated room which is free from draughts and where a temperature between 60 and 70 degrees is maintained. Leaflet No. 20, which may be had free, on request, gives further information on the running of incubators.

Unsatisfactory Hatches.—In certain cases a very small percentage of the eggs may hatch or a large number of the young chickens may die during the first 3 weeks. In cases where the cause of the trouble may not be obvious the local Poultry Instructor should be consulted for advice as to the likely cause of the trouble and methods to adopt to prevent its recurrence. The Poultry Instructor will visit and advise free of charge, on request being made to the County Agricultural Executive Officer. Post-mortem examinations and reports on chicks can also be obtained, free, by sending one or two dead specimens to the Ministry's Veterinary Research Division, The Farm, Stormont, Belfast. Postage on such parcels should be paid.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REMINDERS.

GENERAL.

North West School, Strabane.—This school will be re-opened on Tuesday, 2nd January, 1940, for the resumption of the ordinary course in poultry-keeping, dairying and rural housewifery. Admission is by free scholarship and girls over 16 years of age from each County in Northern Ireland are eligible for the award of these scholarships. There is no qualifying examination for the scholarships which are awarded in the order in which applications are received. Girls intending to take a course at this school should make application at once to the County Agricultural Executive Officer, the local Poultry Instructor or the Ministry of Agriculture. Copies of the school prospectus, which contains an application form, may be obtained free of charge from any of the sources mentioned above.

Licensing of Bulls and Boars.—Bulls which were calved during the first six months of this year must be licensed by the 31st March, 1940. Boars which were farrowed on or before 30th September, 1939, must be licensed by the 31st January, 1940. Applications for licences for both bulls and boars of these ages should be lodged with the Ministry as soon as possible, but not later than the 31st December next. Application forms may be obtained from any Police Barracks, from the County Agricultural Executive Officer, or directly from the Ministry. Farmers keeping unlicensed bulls or boars are liable to prosecution.

Premium Bulls and Boars.—Farmers wishing to keep premium bulls and boars in 1940 should apply immediately to their County Agricultural Executive Officers for full particulars of the Schemes under which County Committee of Agriculture award premiums.

County Poultry Stations.—Eggs for hatching may now be obtained from the County Poultry Stations administered by County Committees of Agriculture. Lists giving the names and addresses of station holders can be obtained from the County Agricultural Executive Officer, or from the local Poultry Instructor.

Accredited Poultry Farms.—Lists giving the names and addresses of the owners of Accredited Poultry Farms from whom hatching eggs may be obtained will be available soon and will be sent free, on request. Copies of this list can also be obtained from the County Agricultural Executive Officer, or from the Poultry Instructor for the district.

LEAFLETS.—A list of leaflets published by the Ministry is given on the last page of this report. Any of these leaflets can be had from the Ministry free, on request. A new leaflet on the destruction of rats and rabbits has been prepared and supplies will soon be available for distribution. This leaflet is No. 93 and gives useful information regarding the methods which may be used to keep these pests down. A leaflet, in a new series of leaflets on the growing of vegetables in allotments has been prepared and supplies will be available soon. This is Allotments Leaflet No. 1 and deals with the preparation of the ground, digging, manuring, etc.

EIGHTEENTH EGG LAYING TEST AT STORMONT.

The first period of four weeks ended on the 28th October, 1939. Moulting has been severe in some pens, as many as 185 pullets being in moult at the end of the period. Egg production on the whole was satisfactory. The total number of eggs laid was 7,801, which gives an average of 11.40 eggs per bird as compared with 10.41 for the first period of the previous test. Of the 7,801 eggs laid, 4,145 or 53.1 per cwt. were super and first grade eggs.

The highest sectional average egg production is to the credit of the Rhode Island Reds in Section 6, viz. 15.5 eggs per bird, the White Wyandottes in Section 2 being next with an average of 13.9 eggs per bird.

Four birds died during the period. This represents a mortality rate of .58 per cent. The rate during the first period of the previous test was .52 per cent.

The following are particulars of the leading pens in each Section at the close of the first period :—

SECTION 1. WHITE WYANDOTTES (Open). 18 Pens.

Position	No. of Pen	Name and Address of Owner.	Number of Eggs Laid.				Test Score
			Super Grade	1st Grade	2nd Grade	Below 2nd Grade	
1	16	Mrs. A. Peel, Oakleigh, Roses Lane Ends, Belfast	16	84	23	1	121
2	4	Lt.-Col. J. P. Galbraith, Clanabogan, Omagh, Co. Tyrone	6	89	16	—	111
3	15	Mrs. A. Peel, Oakleigh, Roses Lane Ends, Belfast	30	55	45	—	111
4	17	Mrs. A. Peel, Oakleigh, Roses Lane Ends, Belfast	4	49	74	1	96
5	1	Mrs. H. G. Darley, Trory, Ballinamallard, Co. Fermanagh.	1	62	42	—	92

SECTION 2. WHITE WYANDOTTES (Stationholders). 10 Pens.

Position	No. of Pen	Name and Address of Owner.	Number of Eggs laid. Super Grade	1st Grade	2nd Grade	Below 2nd Grade	Test Score
1	26	Mrs. M. McBride, Ackinduff, Cabragh, Dungannon, Co. Tyrone	10	68	22	1	93
2	28	Mrs. M. J. Veitch, Knockninny, Thompson's Bridge, Enniskillen, Co. Fermanagh.	4	49	54	1	87
3	30	Mrs. M. E. Warmington, Lakeview, Newtownhamilton, Co. Armagh	14	46	37	11	85

SECTIONS 3 & 4. WHITE LEGHORNS. 14 Pens.

1	39	Mrs. M. Noble, Roundpark House, Killycramph, Lisnaskea, Co. Fermanagh	9	55	34	—	93
2	44	Mr. J. H. White, The Beeches, Strabane, Co. Tyrone	5	40	49	1	84
3	37	Miss I. Gilmer, Rashee, Ballyclare, Co. Antrim	—	16	82	8	76
4	36	Mrs. G. M. Fulton, Dunravine House, Ballykelly, Limavady, Co. Londonderry	3	23	43	1	62

SECTION 5. RHODE ISLAND REDS (Open). 20 Pens.

1	51	The Marquis of Hamilton, Baronscourt, Omagh, Co. Tyrone.	19	63	28	1	108
2	48	Mrs. H. Farr, Elsneuk, Dundrum Road, Newcastle, Co. Down	33	36	20	—	89
3	54	Mrs. J. Kirkpatrick, Ballynagashel, Ballymoney, Co. Antrim	9	33	59	12	88
4	59	Mrs. F. G. Napier, Salry, Ballina-mallard, Co. Fermanagh	2	48	47	—	83
5	58	Mrs. J. McNeill, Drain's Bay, Larne, Co. Antrim	71	7	2	—	80

SECTION 6. RHODE ISLAND REDS (Stationholders). 10 Pens.

1	67	Mrs. H. H. Dickson, Lower Coagh, Co. Tyrone	34	58	29	—	110
2	74	Miss S. McKee, Ardmillan, Killinchy, Co. Down	14	69	32	—	109
3	75	Mrs. J. O'Neill, Annesley Lodge, Coalisland, Co. Tyrone	26	70	3	—	99

SECTION 7. BUFF ROCKS AND BLACK LEGHORNS. 12 Pens.

Position	No. of Pen	Name and Address of Owner	Number of eggs laid. Super Grade	1st Grade	2nd Grade	Below 2nd Grade	Test Score
1	86	Mr. R. Holmes, Killykergan, Coleraine, Co. Londonderry (Black Leghorn)	1	62	42	—	91
2	82	Mrs. J. R. Jackson, Fortview, Coleraine, Co. Londonderry (Buff Rock)	1	64	22	—	85
3	78	Mr. R. Holmes, Killykergan, Coleraine, Co. Londonderry (Buff Rock)	23	31	47	—	82

SECTION 8. OTHER PURE BREEDS. 18 Pens.

1	92	Miss M. A. Lawson, Roundhill House, Strabane, Co. Tyrone (Light Sussex)	9	61	30	1	93
2	94	Mrs. T. J. McLaren, Ballykeel, Sixmilecross, Co. Tyrone (Light Sussex)	15	63	4	—	82
3	93	Miss M. A. Lawson, Roundhill House, Strabane, Co. Tyrone (Light Sussex)	4	60	19	1	76
4	91	Mr. J. Getty (Junr.), Hillcrest, Newtownards, Co. Down (Light Sussex)	9	38	28	1	68

SECTION 9. POULTRY CLUBS AND YOUNG FARMERS' CLUBS. 12 Pens.

1	115	Ballygawley Poultry Club, Co. Tyrone (Rhode Island Red)	4	60	43	—	92
2	119	Portadown Poultry Club, Co. Armagh (Rhode Island Red)	7	50	28	3	77
3	109	Ballywalter Young Farmers' Club, Co. Down (White Wyandotte)	8	46	30	—	75

Test Score means the total of super grade and first grade eggs, plus a maximum of 10 second grade eggs per pullet.

Mrs. A. Peel's pen No. 16 of White Wyandottes in Section 1 is first in the entire test, while Lt.-Col. J. P. Galbraith's pen No. 4 and Mrs. A. Peel's pen No. 15 in the same section are second equal. Third place is occupied by Pen No. 67 of Rhode Island Reds entered by Mrs. H. H. Dickson in the Stationholders' Section for that breed.

AGRICULTURAL INDEX NUMBERS.

Monthly Index Numbers of Prices of Individual Commodities.

(Corrected for Seasonal Variation).

(Base 1927-29 = 100).

Commodity	1939				1938	1937
	October	September	August	July	October	October
Cattle : Fat ...	*	87	81	82	80	91
Store ...	98	95	89	90	89	89
Cows : Fat ...	82	69	67	68	64	76
Sheep & Lambs: Fat	69	66	50	49	59	72
Bacon Pigs ...	*	88	78	80	92	92
Hens & Chickens ...	70	71	68	66	67	74
Ducks	98	91	92	89	97	91
Eggs	93	108	101	97	90	88
Milk :						
For Manufacture	*	93	87	88	83	92
Whole	120	109	117	125	122	121
All	*	98	94	97	96	102
Farmers' Butter ...	87	87	80	81	76	74
Potatoes	103	101	71	78	83	83
Oats	112	83	61	61	73	97
Hay	128	107	91	83	77	83
Oat Straw ...	112	86	84	81	91	93
Grass Seed :						
Perennial ...	102	99	113	—	117	59
Italian	127	102	96	—	79	36
Mixed ...	131	99	133	—	80	45
All	118	97	113	—	97	50

Revised Index Numbers taking Account of Payments under the Cattle Subsidy, the Wheat Act, and Government Payments for Milk.

Cattle : Fat ...	*	101	94	94	94	103
Milk :						
For Manufacture	*	111	108	108	120	101
All	*	111	110	112	121	108

* Not yet available. † Provisional.

Monthly Index Numbers of Prices of Individual Commodities.

(Uncorrected for Seasonal Variation).

(Base 1927-29 = 100).

Commodity	1939				1938	1937
	October	September	August	July	October	October
Cattle : Fat ...	*	82	80	85	72	80
Store ...	96	95	91	93	87	88
Cows : Fat ...	76	65	64	66	60	70
Sheep & Lambs: Fat	61	59	45	48	52	63
Bacon Pigs ...	*	84†	77	77	85	84
Hens & Chickens ...	65	66	61	64	63	70
Ducks	96	88	91	89	96	90
Eggs	135	122	103	83	129	124
Milk :						
For Manufacture	*	88	77	74	82	92
Whole	121	104	104	104	121	121
All	*	92	84	82	95	102
Farmers' Butter ...	86	83	74	74	76	73
Potatoes	101	104	82	68	81	80
Oats	100	79	69	67	64	85
Hay	124	103	90	90	73	79
Oat Straw ...	110	88	84	80	88	90
Grass Seed :						
Perennial ...	102	93	93	—	112	57
Italian	124	83	88	—	74	35
Mixed ...	127	97	109	—	75	43
All	114	90	96	—	91	47

Revised Index Numbers taking Account of Payments under the Cattle Subsidy, the Wheat Act, and Government Payments for Milk.

Cattle : Fat ...	*	95	93	98	84	91
Milk :						
For Manufacture	*	105	96	92	119	101
All	*	104	98	95	120	108

* Not yet available. † Provisional.

PRICES USED IN THE CALCULATION OF THE INDEX NUMBERS.

Commodity	1927-29	1939				1938	1937
		Oct.	Sept.	August	July	Oct.	Oct.
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Cattle :							
Fat, per live cwt.	45 2	*	36 11	36 3	38 3	32 4	36 3
Store, per head	223 7	214 1	211 10	202 11	208 2	195 5	195 11
Cows :							
Fat, per head	336 10	256 3	219 3	215 5	233 6	200 7	236 7
Sheep & Lambs :							
Fat, per head	53 6	32 5	31 9	24 2	25 5	27 11	33 8
Bacon Pigs per dead cwt.	78 8	*	66 4†	60 3	60 7	66 10	66 1
Hens & Chickens per head	3 0½	1 11½	2 0½	1 10½	1 11½	1 10¾	2 1½
Ducks, per head	2 6½	2 5¼	2 3	2 3¾	2 3¼	2 5¼	2 3½
Eggs, per 120	13 6	18 2	16 6	13 11	11 2	17 5	16 9
Milk :							
For Manufacture, per gal.	0 6¼	*	0 5½	0 4¾	0 4¾	0 5¼	0 5¾
Whole, per gal.	1 0	1 2½	1 0½	1 0½	1 0½	1 2½	1 2½
Farmers' Butter, per lb.	1 5½	1 3	1 2½	1 1	1 1	1 1¼	1 0¾
Potatoes, per cwt.	3 5	3 5	3 6	2 9	2 4	2 9	2 9
Oats, per cwt.	8 1	8 1	6 5	5 7	5 5	5 3	6 11
Hay, per ton	73 8	91 1	76 1	66 3	66 0	54 0	58 6
Oat Straw, per ton	47 6	52 3	41 10	39 9	37 9	41 10	42 11
Grass Seed :							
Perennial, per cwt.	16 9	17 1	15 7	15 8	—	18 8	9 7
Italian, per cwt.	22 7	28 0	18 9	20 0	—	16 8	7 10
Mixed, per cwt.	15 11	20 3	15 5	17 5	—	11 11	6 10

* Not yet available. † Provisional.

MINISTRY OF LABOUR RETAIL PRICES AND INDICES.

The Ministry of Labour general index of retail prices of food in Great Britain and Northern Ireland, at September 30th, was 50 per cent. above the level of July, 1914, as compared with 38 per cent. at September 1st, and 39 per cent. at October 1st, 1938. During September there were marked increases in the retail prices of sugar, fish, eggs, butter and bacon, and some increases in the prices of a number of other foods including beef, mutton, flour, bread and cheese. As a result of these increases, the average level of retail prices was approximately 9 per cent. higher at September 30th than at the beginning of the month.

The following table shows the average retail prices of certain foods in large towns and villages on September 30th, 1939, September 1st, 1939, and October 1st, 1938.

Article	Sept. 30, 1939	Sept. 1, 1939	Oct. 1, 1938	Increase over July, 1914.		
				Sept. 30, 1939	Sept. 1, 1939	Oct. 1, 1938
	per lb. s. d.	per lb. s. d.	per lb. s. d.	per cent.	per cent.	per cent.
Beef, British—						
Ribs	1 2¾	1 2¼	1 2½	48	44	45
Thin Flank	0 8	0 7½	0 7¾	20	15	15
Beef, Chilled or Frozen—						
Ribs	0 10	0 9½	0 9½	38	32	32
Thin Flank	0 5¼	0 4¾	0 5	7	1	2
Mutton, British—						
Legs	1 4	1 3½	1 3¼	53	48	47
Breast	0 7¾	0 7½	0 7½	20	14	15
Mutton, Frozen—						
Legs	0 10¾	0 10¼	0 10½	56	51	53
Breast	0 4¼	0 4	0 4	4	3*	—
Bacon (Streaky) ...	1 4½	1 3	1 3¾	47	35	40
Butter—						
Fresh	1 6½	1 4½	1 4¾	27	13	15
Salt	1 6	1 3¼	1 3¾	27	7	10
Cheese	0 10½	0 10	0 10¾	21	16	24
	Per Qt.	Per Qt.	Per Qt.			
Milk	0 6¾	0 6¾	0 6¾	94	92	96
	each	each	each			
Eggs (Fresh)	0 2¼	0 2	0 2¼	88	58	75
	Per 4 lb.	Per 4 lb.	Per 4 lb.			
Bread	0 8½	0 8¼	0 8½	45	42	48
	Per 7 lb.	Per 7 lb.	Per 7 lb.			
Flour	1 1¾	1 1½	1 2½	30	26	36
Potatoes	0 6½	0 6½	0 5¾	35	33	20

* Decrease.

The cost of maintaining unchanged the pre-Great War standard of living of working-class families at September 30th was approximately 65 per cent. over the level of July, 1914, as compared with 55 per cent. at September 1st, 1939, and 55 per cent. at October 1st, 1938.

AGRICULTURAL PRICES.

TRADE AND PRICES OF LIVE STOCK AT BELFAST AUCTION MARTS.

The offerings of fat cattle at the Belfast Auction Sales last month were generally of mixed quality, and in the latter part of the month many farmers brought forward grass-fed stock because of the colder weather and the seasonal deterioration of grassland.

The trade for beef eased during the first fortnight of October, but recovered considerably in the next two weeks, only to fall away again at the close owing to the weaker tone of the cross-Channel markets. Prices moved in sympathy with these fluctuations in demand, and quotations all over were appreciably lower than those ruling during September. The prices per live cwt. last month generally ranged as follows:—First quality and super grade cattle, 36/- to 41/6d.; good commercial animals, 35/- to 39/-, and rougher and unfinished beasts 33/- to 38/-.

The following table shows the average prices per live cwt. for fat cattle during October, compared with those ruling at the corresponding dates a year ago:—

Week ended	*Per cwt.*	*Week ended*	*Per cwt.*
7th October, 1939	... 38/3	8th October, 1938	... 32/7
14th ,, ,,	... 36/3	15th ,, ,,	... 31/10
21st ,, ,,	... 38/–	22nd ,, ,,	... 32/–
28th ,, ,,	... 37/11	29th ,, ,,	... 31/6
4th November, 1939	... 36/5	5th November, 1938	... 32/1
Average for Month	... 37/4	Average for Month	... 32/–

Fat cows and bulls were in firm request during last month, and prices recorded a further upward trend.

In the store cattle section the demand fluctuated during the month; a firm trade ruled early in the month, and previous prices were improved upon, but later business slackened off until the fourth week of the month, when it made a good recovery only to fall away again at the close of October. Price movements for store cattle had a fairly steady downward trend in sympathy with beef prices, but good medium weights fully maintained late rates. The

general ranges of prices during last month were: Two-year-olds, £12 to £16 10s. 0d., six-quarter-olds, £10 to £14 10s. 0d., yearlings £9 to £12 10s. and calves and weanlings £6 to £10 10s. 0d. per head.

The demand for fat sheep and lambs at the Marts was fairly steady throughout last month, and prices were generally firmer than those ruling at the previous month's sales. The estimated prices per pound dressed carcase weight ranged from 7d. to 10d. for lambs and from 4½d. to 7d. for fat ewes. Sales of breeding and store sheep continued during October, but the seasonal trade in this end is now drawing to a close. The offerings were as a rule of variable quality, and trade was dull at easier rates.

The weekly price ranges for fat cows, store cattle, dairy cattle and fat sheep and lambs appear in the table on page — .

PRICES OF OTHER STOCK AT THE BELFAST AUCTION MARTS.

Description.		Week ended 7-10-39	Week ended 14-10-39	Week ended 21-10-39	Week ended 28-10-39	Week ended 4-11-39
Fat Cows	Range of 1st quality	£14 to £20	£14 to £18-10	£15 to £21-10	£16 to £22-10	£14 to £20-10
	,, 2nd ,,	£11 to £15	£11 to £15	£10 to £16	£12 to £17	£10 to £15
Store Cattle :						
Large Forward Stores ...	Range of 1st quality	£14 to £16-10	£14-10 to £16	£14-10 to £17-12-6	£14 to £16-10	£14 to £16
	,, 2nd ,,	£10 to £13-15	£12-15 to £13-15	£12-10 to £14-5	£12 to £14	£12 to £14
Younger Stores ...	Range of 1st quality	£10-10 to £12	£10-10 to £12-10	£10 to £12-5	£10-10 to £12	£10 to £12
	,, 2nd ,,	£8 to £10	£8 to £10	£8 to £10	£8 to £10	£8 to £10
Dairy Cattle :						
Milch Cows	Range of 1st quality	£22 to £30	£22 to £31	£22 to £30-5	£22 to £28	£22 to £30
	,, 2nd ,,	£17 to £21	£17 to £21	£17 to £21	£17 to £21	£17 to £21
Springers	Range of 1st quality	£20 to £25-15	£20 to £25	£20 to £22	£20 to £22	£21 to £26-10
	,, 2nd ,,	£16 to £19-10	£17-10 to £19-10	£16 to £19	£17 to £19	£17 to £20
Sheep and Lambs :						
Crossbred & White Ewes	Range of 1st quality	30/– to 40/–	30/– to 42/6	30/– to 40/–	30/– to 45/–	30/– to 44/–
	,, 2nd ,,	24/– to 31/–	25/– to 33/–	25/– to 31/–	25/– to 32/6	25/– to 36/–
Blackface Ewes ...	,, 1st ,,	26/– to 34/6	24/– to 31/6	24/– to 31/–	26/– to 35/–	23/– to 31/6
	,, 2nd ,,	20/– to 27/–	20/– to 25/–	18/– to 24/–	18/– to 27/6	16/– to 25/–
Crossbred & White Lambs	,, 1st ,,	34/– to 45/6	33/– to 45/–	35/– to 48/–	35/– to 45/–	35/– to 45/–
	,, 2nd ,,	26/– to 34/–	26/– to 37/–	27/– to 39/–	25/– to 34/–	25/– to 37/–
Blackface Lambs ...	,, 1st ,,	18/– to 27/6	19/– to 27/–	18/– to 22/6	19/– to 26/–	18/– to 24/–
	,, 2nd ,,	12/– to 17/–	14/– to 18/–	12/– to 17/–	12/– to 18/–	13/– to 18/–
Rams	,, 1st ,,	35/– to 50/–	32/– to 61/–	32/– to 50/–	35/– to 42/–	35/– to 45/–
	,, 2nd ,,	28/– to 43/–	25/– to 39/–	27/– to 38/–	30/– to 37/6	30/– to 40/–

TRADE AND PRICES OF LIVE STOCK AT FAIRS.

The demand for store cattle at fairs held in Northern Ireland during October was quite brisk in the early part of the month, but a weaker tendency developed and trade deteriorated appreciably as the month advanced, to finish on a dull note. The quality of the supplies was generally moderate, and in some instances the condition of the cattle was above average. The best type of polled bullocks suitable for winter fattening and heifers for breeding purposes cleared fairly readily and previous quotations were maintained for top qualities. Other cattle, however, were difficult to sell and prices all over recorded a decline as compared with the previous month.

Offerings of fat cattle at these fairs encountered a rather dull enquiry but in most areas a fair local trade was transacted at easier rates than those ruling in September. The quality of the bulk of the beef cattle was up to the usual standard and the beasts most in favour were young medium-weight "supers" of from 8 to 10 cwt.

A brisk enquiry ruled throughout October for dairy cattle, and good clearances were effected at prices which were further improved on the month. Only aged and rough cattle failed to find purchasers and good young cows and nice springing heifers suitable for the cross-Channel trade were particularly in request.

In the sheep and lamb section the best sellers were fat lambs and breeding ewes. The demand for the mixed offerings was rather variable and prices moved irregularly but on balance were little changed.

Trade for young pigs was fairly steady during the month, and small feeders, who usually depend largely on home-produced feeding stuffs, were the principal buyers at many centres. Good clearances were effected, and prices moved in seller's favour. Business for breeding sows was variable but as a general rule good types of Yorks and York crosses sold readily at previous quotations. The general range of prices for breeding sows last month was from £5 to £13 per head according to breed and quality.

PRICES OF LIVE STOCK.

Average prices of Live Stock at Fairs during the month of October, 1939.

Date	Fair	Calves (under 9 months)	Store Cattle	Fat Cattle (18 months and over)	Springers		Milch Cows	Fat Lambs (under 12 months)	Breeding Ewes	Young Pigs
					Cows	Heifers				
13		Per head	Per cwt. Live weight	Per cwt. Live weight	Per head	Per head	Per head	Per head	Per head	Per head
		£ s.			£ s.	£ s.	£ s.	£ s.	£ s.	£ s.
3	Omagh ...	8 0	40/– to 42/6	38/6	15 10	14 10	16 0	†1 18/6	*2 0	—
4	Rathfriland ...	7 1/6	36/– to 42/–	37/–	19 0	18 0	18 0	†1 5	†1 17/6 ‡1 8/6	1 7/6
5	Ballymoney ...	7 13/3	36/3 to 40/–	—	21 0	19 10	18 2/6	‡ 19/3 †1 17/6	—	1 8/6
5	Strabane	7 0	38/6 to 42/–	37/–	20 0	16 0	—	—	†1 15	—
6	Moy	—	35/- to 41/-	37/-	15 12/6	15 2/6	14 15	†1 12/6	†1 15	—
9	Irvinestown ...	7 0	35/– to 38/–	35/–	15 0	14 10	14 0	*1 17/6	*2 0 †1 17/6	1 15
9	Limavady ...	—	36/– to 42/–	—	—	—	—	—	†1 0	1 7/6
10	Enniskillen ...	7 1/3	33/– to 39/–	36/–	17 0	15 0	14 10	*1 15 †1 7/6	—	1 12/6
11	Crossgar ...	—	36/– to 39/–	—	—	—	—	—	—	1 14
11	Kilrea	6 6	35/– to 40/–	37/–	19 5	17 10	—	†1 11/3	—	1 10
13	Ballygawley ...	—	28/– to 41/–	34/6	16 0	—	15 10	—	—	1 19/6
16	Camlough ...	5 10	37/– to 42/–	36/–	18 10	17 10	15 10	†1 7/6	‡1 10	—
17	Claudy	—	35/– to 40/–	37/6	17 0	15 0	—	—	‡1 2/6	1 10
18	Lisnaskea ...	6 8/9	31/– to 37/–	34/–	17 5	17 0	16 0	—	—	2 0
19	Ballynahinch ...	—	36/– to 40/–	—	19 0	—	17 0	†1 12/6	†2 0	2 0
21	Moneymore ...	6 13	34/– to 42/–	34/6	18 0	17 0	21 10	—	†1 13	—
21	Portadown ...	6 14/3	36/– to 39/–	38/6	18 10	18 0	18 0	—	—	1 17/6
23	Fintona	6 6/3	40/– to 42/–	36/–	16 10	16 0	17 0	†1 18	†1 10	1 17/6
26	Anatrim	—	34/– to 40/–	36/–	22 0	—	—	—	—	1 15
27	Castlederg ...	6 5	33/- to 35/6	34/6	15 10	—	—	—	†1 12/6	1 15
27	Killylea	—	31/– to 43/6	37/6	19 0	—	20 0	—	†1 17/6	—
28	Ballymena ...	7 0/6	33/– to 41/–	—	24 0	21 0	23 0	—	—	1 10
30	Banbridge ...	6 2/9	34/– to 38/–	36/–	16 0	—	15 15	*1 7	—	1 14

* Long Wools. † Downs and Crossbreds. ‡ Mountain.

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE.

List of Leaflets

AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION.

Leaflet
No. 60 Advantages of Winter Agricultural Classes.
Scholarships in Agricultural Science.
Scholarships in Creamery Management.
Scholarships in Horticulture.
Prospectus of Ulster Dairy School.
Prospectus of North West School.
Prospectus of Greenmount Agricultural and Horticultural College.

CATTLE.

Leaflet
No. 54 The Breeding and Rearing of Calves.
„ 5 The Dishorning of Calves.
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„ 14 Cheese-making on the Farm.

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„ 11 Fruit Tree Pests—Aphides and Apple Sucker.
„ 12 Fruit Tree Pests—Caterpillars.
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„ 6 The Packing of Apples in Standard Boxes.
„ 65 The Packing of Apples in Barrels.
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Guide to the Marketing of Fruit Act.

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Any of the above publications may be obtained free of charge and post free on application to the Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Stormont, Belfast.

The following publications can be obtained from His Majesty's Stationery Office, 80 Chichester Street, Belfast, at the prices stated :—

(1)	The Annual Report of the Ministry of Agriculture for Northern Ireland	Price, 2/6 net.
(2)	Annual Report upon the Agricultural Statistics for Northern Ireland	Price, 2/– net.
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